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# BANDWAGON

JOURNAL OF THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY



JULY-AUGUST 1985





## THE JOURNAL OF THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Fred D. Pfening, Jr., Editor

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### THIS MONTH'S COVER

In 1913 the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus used the program which is reproduced on this month's cover in its original colors. It is typical of the programs of the larger shows of the period as it contains considerable "boilerplate" about the menagerie, and other aspects of the circus, and an insert with the program and local advertising. This particular insert was used for dates at Utica and Oswego, New York, in late June.

This program was printed by the Courier Company of Buffalo, New York, and is one of the last examples of the circus work of that famous firm. Original in Pfening Archives.

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# JOHN ROBINSON CIRCUS

## Season of 1925

by Joseph T. Bradbury

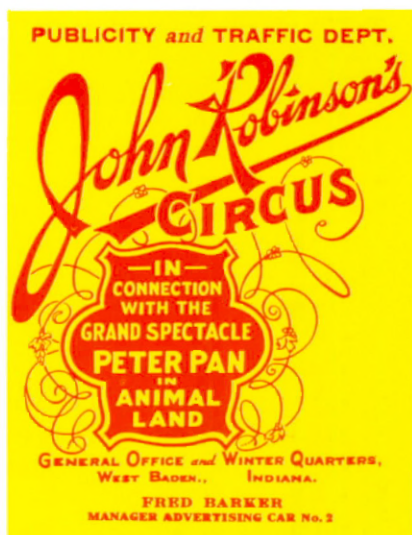
*Foreword: The events narrated in this article take place immediately following the conclusion of the John Robinson 1924 season, an account of which by Chang Reynolds appeared in the November-December 1980 Bandwagon. It is the author's intention to follow this with separate articles covering the 1926 and 1927 seasons (to be printed in Bandwagon at a later date).*

To set the stage for the important events affecting the John Robinson Circus in 1925 let us look at the situation of the American Circus Corporation (owned by Jerry Mugivan, Bert Bowers, and Edward Ballard) the previous season. In 1924 the ACC put three circuses on the road: Sells-Floto with Zack Terrell manager; Hagenbeck-Wallace with Bert Bowers, manager; and John Robinson with C.D. Odom, manager. Bowers was the only one of the three owners still actively managing a show on the road. Tradition has it that Mugivan had been trying for a couple of years to convince Bowers to retire from the road.

Bowers did finally quit trooping in the fall of 1924 when he left for a trip to Europe in October. Since both the Hagenbeck and Robinson shows were still on the road, C.D. (Danny) Odom was sent from Robinson to manage Hagenbeck-Wallace for the remainder of the season and Odom's assistant on John Robinson, Sam B. Dill, was installed as manager of that show.

When the 1924 season was concluded a rather strange event occurred, one which historians to this day have never fully understood. John Robinson and Hagenbeck-Wallace swapped winterquarters. Robinson, instead of returning to its regular quarters at Peru, Indiana, was sent to West Baden, Indiana, where Hagenbeck-Wallace had been quartered for several years, and that show in turn went into quarters at Peru. One possible explanation which has come forth is that the equipment of Hagenbeck-Wallace had been run down in recent years and a considerable rebuilding job was planned over the winter of 1924-25 and the Peru shops were better equipped to do this job.

However, the swap of quarters wasn't the only odd occurrence following the 1924 season. The two shows also swapped elephant herds. Al Langdon brought his bulls to West Baden to go with Robinson in 1925 and Cheerful Gardner took his herd to Peru to make the tour with Hagenbeck-Wallace. Again, the reason for this switch has not been fully determined. It may have been that the Corporation owners figured Cheerful Gardner was their top elephant man and could best serve during the off-months at Peru where the combined herds of Sells-Floto and Hagenbeck-Wallace would be housed and from where the units of trained

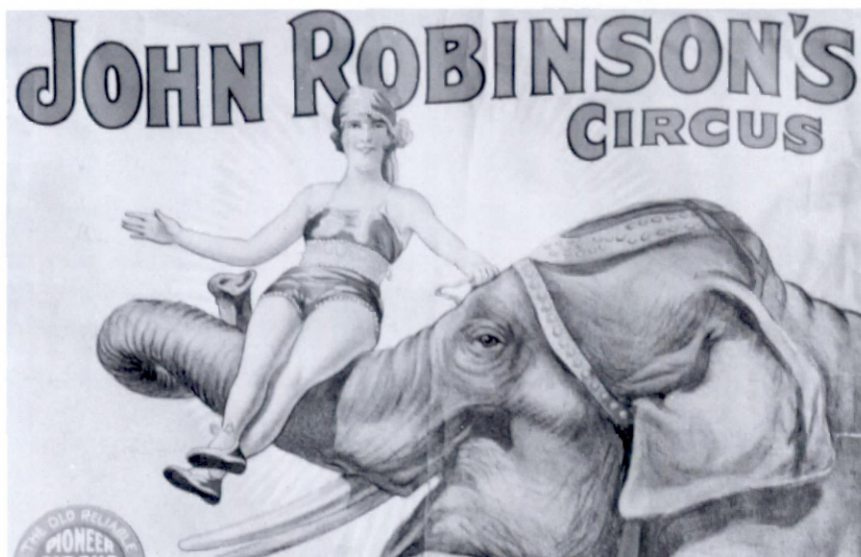


This art work was made up for the 1925 season and was used on a letterhead printed in red for the advance department. Pfening Archives.

horses, elephants, etc. would at times be shipped out to be used with various winter indoor circuses.

Chang Reynolds says the 10 elephants which had toured with Hagenbeck-Wallace in 1924 and would now go out with John Robinson in 1925 were Jughead Nellie, Pin-

This Erie poster was first used in 1924 and was again used during the 1925 season. The "Pioneer Circus of the World" slogan was used on a number of Robinson posters. Pfening Archives.



to, Floto Jennie (One-eyed Jennie), Josky, Wallace Trilby, Wallace Eva, Cross Country Babe, Rose, Mabel, and Queen.

The changes in managers of John Robinson and Hagenbeck-Wallace made prior to the close of 1924 remained permanent, and the same three shows the ACC had put on the road that season hit it again in 1925. Zack Terrell also remained as road manager of Sells-Floto. It appears from correspondence in the Pfening Archives that Danny Odom also acted as head man at the Peru quarters during the winter months, a job he would hold as long as he was an active road manager. (When he retired after the 1930 season Jess Adkins then got the boss man job at Peru.) Whenever Dill needed something at Peru or to coordinate a matter it was always sent to Hagenbeck-Wallace and if necessary of course then on to Mugivan. During the years the American Circus Corporation had multiple units on the road each show observed a strict accounting system and debits or credits were issued for even the most minute items going back and forth between the various shows.

An interesting example of this correspondence between Dill with John Robinson in West Baden and Hagenbeck-Wallace in Peru is a letter dated February 20, 1925. First item of prime importance is that Dill advises that insurance should be taken out on the following number and type of cars that will comprise the 1925 John Robinson train.

- 6 coaches
- 6 stocks
- 11 wood flats
- 1 steel flat
- 1 advance car
- 25. Total number of cars season of 1925.





John Robinson midway with sideshow at right and menagerie top in center, probably at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania,

Other items from the letter read as follows:  
"We will send the Walter monkey, by express, tomorrow.

"We will also bill out car No. 60 to you tomorrow and have placed 16 of your horse pedestals in the car as per instructions from Mr. Woodward. We will send the faucets and other pipe fittings for the car by parcel post as we are afraid they would be taken off the car enroute. Note that the Ricardo saddle has arrived. Send us check for \$50.00 as we have paid him that amount for the saddle.

"The writer had a letter from Mr. Curtis [noted wagon builder Bill Curtis] stating that he was going to make a hipp cart for you. There are two cart wheels here in the blacksmith shop that are new and thinking you might make use of them for your purpose we are putting them in the car and we are also putting two wheels in the car that belongs to Sells-Floto that we took out of their elephant car when it came down here and we forgot to put them back. Kindly turn the wheels over to them. We are also putting the train chalks that were stored in the basement of the office in the car.

"If there is anything else that you want put in the car—wire us before 12 (noon) Saturday.

"When you renew the insurance on the tractors do so for us also. We will use the

May 4-5, 1925. Note tableau wagon at left with full side painting of Roman chariot racing. It was used as a ticket wagon and

same two tractors and the Graham truck if you get it.

"We had formerly sent you the bill of lading for the King saddle but herewith hand you the duplicate."

From this letter we learn that evidently the Sells-Floto elephant car was used to send the Hagenbeck-Wallace bulls to West Baden and then no doubt same car was used to transport the John Robinson herd to Peru. Car No. 60 must have been some sort of pie car that for some reason was being transferred from John Robinson to Hagenbeck-Wallace.

In the Pfening Archives is a copy of the February 21, 1925, transfer of equipment, animals etc. from John Robinson to Hagenbeck-Wallace. It is signed by Sam B. Dill and reads as follows.

Hagenbeck Wallace Circus	
DR TO	
John Robinson's Circus	
Car #60	\$6,000.00
J. Pet, 25¢ S. (slot) machine	372.27
1 Monkey (Walter)	150.00
	<hr/> 6,522.27

Unidentified trio standing in front of John Robinson's billing depicting a huge hippo and advertising the show's stand at New Kensington, Pennsylvania, June 3, 1925. Pfening Archives.



no doubt in the street parade, which was restored later in the season. Pfening Archives.

Jerry Mugivan noted the transfer sheet and, ever watchful to keep all of the dealings between his various shows done "according to Hoyle," penned the following beneath the sheet.

"J.M. (initialed), the above slot machine was broken in the car last summer. Dill was going to throw it away. I had it sent to factory for repairs, now he wants full price for the machine that I paid last summer." (All the boys had to watch their step when the Turk was looking on.) What was done about this matter is not indicated. Mugivan wrote at the top only, "File This."

On February 13, 1925, Dill wrote on John Robinson stationary to Hagenbeck-Wallace, Peru, Indiana, the following:

"At the close of the season Herman Hackenschmidt (wrestler) said he wanted to come back to this show. Have heard nothing from him since. Now we have signed up Edd Reece, the man that Barnes show had, that lets the auto run over him. Going to use him (Reece) in the concert and can turn Hackenschmidt and Gene over to you if you want them. Advise."

A pencilled note in Mugivan's handwriting read, "I can not use Hackenschmidt or Gene for I will have Buffalo Bill Wild West [for the aftershow]. Probably Mr. Terrell [Sells-Floto] can use them. I would advise Terrell using the wrestler."

Evidently Mugivan had written to Sam Dill in West Baden earlier concerning acquisition of tent stakes, which prompted this reply letter of March 26, 1925.

"Answering your letter of March 22nd, wish to advise we are trying to get you stakes, but will be unable to get you a full car load."

Mugivan wrote at the bottom a note to be sent back to Dill which said, "Get us all the stakes that you can at once for we have not got enough stakes to put up the two shows with [Hagenbeck-Wallace and Sells-Floto]."

Another letter in the Pfening Archives is addressed to all three shows, John Robinson, Hagenbeck-Wallace, and Sells-Floto, from R.M. Harvey at the show's office in Chicago, Illinois. The text and Mugivan's response tell a little on how advertising



matters were handled by the three shows.

Harvey's letter read, "The Safety Razor Co. have again agreed to offer us their ad for your newspapers, for which they are to pay \$500.00 in trade. This is to be paid in Gem Safety Razors valued at \$175.00, Everready Safety Razors at \$175.00, Everready Brushes at \$150.00. Understood Mr. Farrar to say that if you cannot dispose of these goods and want to take the ad that he will handle the goods for you on a small percent and he will also take his commissions in goods as heretofore. Please advise by return mail if this is agreeable to you. P.S. The Safety Razor contract is for \$500.00 for each show, the same as last year."

Mugivan wrote in reply, "Please take all matters pertaining to advertising up with Mr. Odom or Mr. Terrell. They will answer for their show."

During the early months of 1925 there was a minimum of news in the trade publications coming from the John Robinson quarters in West Baden. One short note in an early January *Billboard* said that Harry Sells, who for three years had been superintendent of the Christy Bros. Shows, would be with John Robinson in 1925. He was to report to West Baden by January 20.

Expected troubles with the Billers Alliance union over wage scales circuses would pay was averted when a new two-year agreement was signed. Shows signing the new contract were Ringling-Barnum, Sparks, Al G. Barnes, Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Wild West, Walter L. Main, Robbins Bros., and all three of the American Circus Corporation units, Sells-Floto, Hagenbeck-Wallace, and John Robinson.

John Robinson ran an ad in the January 17, 1925, *Billboard* asking that Billposters and Bannermen who desired contracts with the show in 1925 write to Arthur Hopper at the West Baden quarters. The ad noted the agent's positions were filled.

In the same issue Hagenbeck-Wallace had a much larger ad which gave some of the terms of the new contract with the billers union. It said the show had signed the new union scale of \$110.00 per month with the usual meal money allowance, and wants for the advance, which included all-around billers, lithographers, bannermen, and programmers. "Will place some students," the ad continued. "Sober energetic men only—boozers and agitators will not be tolerated." Inquiries were to be sent to J.C. Donahue, general agent, in the Chicago office.

Still in January it was announced that Robert E. Hickey would return to John Robinson as general press representative. He had been with the show in the past but left late in 1923 to become publicity director for the World Amusement Service Association of Chicago and New York. Hickey advised that inside work was not entirely up to his liking and he would answer the "Call of the White Tops" again, resigning from World Amusement and signing with John Robinson for the 1925 season.

The January 31, 1925 *Billboard* said that

E.W. Adams, well known ticket seller, had signed with John Robinson for the coming season. He currently was chief clerk at the Alabama Hotel in Anniston, Alabama. Adams, a good friend of the author, later moved over to the Gentry-Patterson Circus and was present when that show folded at the end of the season.

One interesting newcomer with the Robinson show in 1925 was Louis R. Sander-son, a well known musician who had been with Ringling-Barnum. He had also in the past been with Al G. Barnes, Sells-Floto, Walter L. Main, and Ringling Bros. circuses. He planned to join the Robinson band for rehearsals in West Baden and would bring with him a new overture he had composed and would have a tryout for possible use in the band's "book." It was titled "Echoes of the Movies."



Six-horse hitch moving John Robinson baggage wagon to the lot, probably Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, May 4-5, 1925. Pfening Archives.

There were several published reports that John Robinson would move on 30 cars in 1925 but it is felt all of these are in error. Best evidence is that the show moved on 25 cars as reported earlier; in fact the show remained on that number through its final season of 1930. The show continued to use the old style 60-foot wooden flats, all except the one steel flat which was mentioned in Dill's list. John Robinson was the last of the American Circus Corporation units to get new all-steel 70- and 72-foot flat cars. Hagenbeck-Wallace got new Mt. Vernon flats in 1921 and Sells-Floto got Keith cars in 1922. John Robinson didn't obtain new flats until the 1928 season, the cars coming from Mt. Vernon. Unfortunately, no photos have surfaced which picture the one steel flat used in 1925. Conceivably, it could have been either a Mt. Vernon or Keith, but in all probability it was one of the very early steel cars, still a 60-footer, but resembling in appearance the wooden, or semi-steel, flats, as they were often referred to.

The John Robinson physical equipment used in 1925 was basically the same as that going back to the 25-car Howes Great London Show of 1921 and the retitled Gollmar Bros. show of 1922. When the ACC cut down from four shows in 1922 (Sells-Floto, Hagenbeck-Wallace, John Robinson, and Gollmar Bros.) to three in 1923 (Sells-Floto, Hagenbeck-Wallace, and John Robinson),

the equipment on the Robinson show for the most part was that which had been on Gollmar the year before. Some pieces which had been on the John Robinson show of 1922 did go into the 1923, some went to Sells-Floto, but a considerable amount was declared surplus and put up for sale.

The Robinson baggage wagons in 1925 were painted a light yellow (sometimes referred to as cream in color) with lettering and numbering in red. Wheels and gears were also thought to have been red in color. For several years in the early '20s the American Circus Corporation units had different color schemes for their rolling stock. Sells-Floto's wagons were white with red lettering and Hagenbeck-Wallace used red with white lettering. Even Sells-Floto's train was white with a red title. Both Ha-

genbeck-Wallace and John Robinson's flat cars were orange but the former used white lettering while Robinson's appears to have been red. The 1925 season was the last that the ACC would have different colors for the baggage wagons. Beginning in 1926 and from then on, all shows' wagons would be red with white lettering, and even the Sells-Floto train, which from the beginning had been white, would take on the familiar orange hue of its sister shows.

In 1924 Robinson had used 13 cages in the menagerie and in all probability this was the number in 1925. Most of the cages had gone back to the 1921 Howes Great London days and generally were rather plain and devoid of fancy carvings or decorations. Victor, the well publicized male hippo which had come to the show in 1921, was now a whopper and during the next several years would sire a number of youngsters to enlarge the ACC menageries. Working wild animals occupied the majority of cages. In the menagerie, in addition to the elephants already listed, were a number of other lead stock, camels, zebras, etc.

Mugivan and his partners had decided that 1925 would mark the end of the daily street parade on all of the three units. This was the coming trend, especially for the larger circuses. Ringling-Barnum's final parades were given in 1920 and Al G. Barnes quit parading following its July 13, 1924, stand in Denver, Colorado. However, as we shall later learn, the street parades on all three ACC units were restored after a few weeks into the season. The reappearance on the road of the Miller Bros. 101



Ranch Wild West Show as a top flight 40-car railer, using as nucleus the 20-car Walter L. Main Circus which the Millers had purchased from Andrew Downie at conclusion of the 1924 season, was a major factor in the restoration of the parade. The new Ranch show presented the traditional daily street parade, advertised it mightily and the competition was keenly felt by the Mugivan shows, so much that it became necessary to restore the parade. According to the trade publications all of the ACC shows went out equipped with all of their parade wagons with exception of the steam calliopes. Air calliopes were present on opening day. Unfortunately adequate photo coverage is not available which would prove positively what vehicles used the previous year were still present. We can only speculate.

In 1924 John Robinson used for the No. 1, lead bandwagon, the huge, heavily carved vehicle which had originated on Norris & Rowe in 1910, part of a set built by Leonhardt Wagon Co. of Baltimore. It came into Mugivan's hands later and was used in 1921 on Howes Great London, and hence by the chain of events earlier mentioned, to John Robinson. Possibly, this wagon did go out in 1925, but more probably it remained in the West Baden quarters, where tradition has it destroyed in an accidental fire about 1927.



The No. 2 bandwagon was the old Dode Fisk tableau and it is quite certain this one did go out in 1925. In fact, it remained on John Robinson long after all parades finally ceased, staying with the show through the final 1930 season. Both the sideshow and clown bandwagons had large full side paintings which were changed over the years. Photos indicate these wagons were on the show in 1925.

In the 1924 parade was a former Forepaugh-Sells tableau-den which may have gone out in 1925. After John Robinson moved to quarters in Peru following the 1928 season this old tab-den was left in West Baden and photos taken a few years later show it in a derelict condition.

The John Robinson air calliope originated on Sells-Floto and came in 1921 to Howes Great London. By 1924 it had been remodeled and according to *Billboard* reports it made the full 1925 tour.

The steam calliope had been on Yankee Robinson and went to Mugivan following the 1920 season, where it was placed on the 1921 Howes show. In 1922 while on Gollmar Bros. it was remodeled and had been used by John Robinson in 1923-24. When the 1925 season began it was left in storage at West Baden.

No detailed listing of the 1925 canvas spread has turned up but probably it was the same or nearly so as that used by John Robinson two years later in 1927, which was as follows: Big top, 150 with three 50's; Menagerie, 80 with five 40's; Sideshow, 60 with two 40's; cookhouse, 45 x 120; two stables, 35 x 105 each; and pad-room, 60 with three 30's.

The only really informative article concerning the West Baden quarters activities came in the April 11, 1925, *Billboard*. It read as follows: "JOHN ROBINSON CIRCUS. Ready for Season's Tour Which Opens April 17 at West Baden, Ind.—New Features Added to Program.

"Activities have just about ceased at West Baden, Ind. where the John Robinson Circus has been made ready for its 1925 tour, and everybody there is awaiting April 17, the date set for the first performance.

"Many new features have been added to the program, and most prominent will be the wrestling tiger, which will be displayed

**John Robinson lot during morning set-up, probably at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, May 4-5, 1925. Note cage wagon in background. Pfening Archives.**

by Loraine Wallace. Capt. Ricardo has broken in several new lions and will offer his daring act of 12 males. Nellie Roth is putting the finishing touches to the 'big' tiger act. In the dog barns Wink Weaver has mastered many new and novel tricks and acts for the arena and rings, and several new monkey stunts as well.

"Robert Thornton continues as equestrian director, and is rehearsing the opening spec, which will be titled 'Peter Pan' and has been clothed with brand new colorful wardrobe and properties. All animals in this spectacle will be worked by Ione Carl. Patricia Salmon, well-known vocalist, will again present her dove songs. Two liberty horse acts will be displayed and are just

about broken in readiness for presentation by Robert Thornton and Rudy Rudyhoff.

"Sam Dill, manager, is enthused over results of his assistants in the getting the show ready for the unusual circus program that has been arranged. W.M. (Egypt) Thompson is the assistant manager, and his efforts around the quarters have more than shown for themselves.

"Six new baggage wagons as well as five new cages have been built this winter, and there is a new private car for staff and executives, new seats, a new calliope for the band, as well as new canvas and poles. The show has been painted thoroughly and looks spick and span, and the train of 30 cars is ready to be loaded and moved to Louisville, Ky., the second stand.

"Al Langdon, elephant trainer, has created a few new tricks for his department. The cookhouse is ready, and George Davis is 'all set.'

"Bill Bachtel, manager of Advertising Car No. 1, recently arrived in West Baden and has started billing."

A few comments on the above are in order. No doubt some rebuilding of both the cages and baggage wagons may have taken place but it is very doubtful that any baggage wagons or cages were built new, from the ground up. Photos taken about 1927 picture the same cages the show had been using for a number of years and in fact there is a letter on file about 1928 which tells of the poor condition the old cages are in, which wouldn't be the case had six new ones been built in 1925. No doubt the writer refers to only extensive repair work. It is highly possible the show got a new private car. Replacement of older coaches did take place periodically. Possibly the car referred to came from the Peru pool or maybe out of regular rail system service but in any event it would only be "new" to the Robinson show. Note the article referred to 30 cars, as did others.

The 1925 John Robinson Circus staff roster was as follows: Sam B. Dill, manager; Wm. M. Thompson, assistant manager; James Albanese, treasurer; Hubert Sicks, secretary; Leonard Karsh and Arthur Hopper, general agent and railroad contractor; Wm. J. Lester, local contractor; Fred J. Barker, special agent; Bob Hickey, advance press agent; Duke Mills, manager of sideshow; Robert Thornton, equestrian director; Wink W. Weaver, assistant equestrian director; Harry Levy, superintendent privileges; Wade Zumwalt, musical director; Robert Courtney, superintendent reserved seats; Harry Sells, superintendent canvas; Jack Hogan, trainmaster; George Law, boss hostler; Lee Stiles, superintendent commissary department; R.H. King, superintendent of lights; Earl Bapty, superintendent of props; James Scanlong, superintendent ring stock; John Hickey, superintendent working crew; E.H. Damron and H. Grissom, 24-hour men; Al Langdon, superintendent of elephants; Chas. Prentice, boss carpenter; Capt. Ricardo, superintendent animals; Adolph Treichel, blacksmith; Wm. Backel, manager of advance car No. 1; Bernie



Head, manager of advance car No. 2; Herbert Duval, legal adjuster; E.V. Dixon, announcer.

A total of 29 men occupied advance car No. 1, which included the car manager, press agent, secretary, pastemaker, steward, billposters, lithographers, and bannermen.

The John Robinson official "Call" advertisement was printed in the April 4, 1925, *Billboard*. The ad stated that the season was to open at West Baden, Indiana, Friday, April 17. Rehearsals were to start April 12. All people engaged were to acknowledge this call and report accordingly.

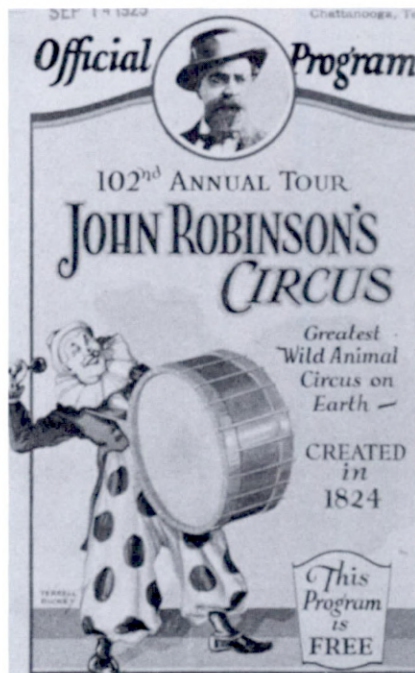
Also in the same *Billboard* was a large advertisement stating that Gil Robinson's book *Old Wagon Show Days* was ready with an introductory note by the Hon. William H. Taft, former president of the United States. Written by Gil Robinson, son and partner of John Robinson, the founder of the John Robinson Circus and Menagerie, the book had long been publicized as forecoming. Several paragraphs were used to describe the book, which presented the Robinson show as being established in 1824. In the ad was the *Billboard's* own plug, reading, "*Old Wagon Show Days* is a valuable edition to the history of the circus. It is, as a note on the outside of the cover modestly states, 'a simple narrative of romantically heroic adventures in the development of the circus by one of America's most famous pioneers of the show business.'"

The timing of the book with opening of the 1925 season was great publicity for the John Robinson show. The antiquity of the show was heavily featured in its publicity and the portrait of the bearded "Old John Robinson" was used on its posters and daubs. Using the 1824 date as the show's origin, beginning with the 1923 season which was termed the 100th year, each new season added another year until now the 1925 tour was proclaimed as the 102nd. Strangely enough circus historians didn't seriously question the 1824 date until the late Dick Conover did so in a *Bandwagon* article in the early 1950s.

Spring 1925 had arrived and the circus season was at hand. The country was well into the Coolidge years, generally regarded today as rather prosperous and tranquil times for both the nation in general and circus business in particular. Calvin Coolidge had ascended to the presidency upon the death of Warren Harding in 1923 and the next year had won for himself a new four-year term in the White House. The early '20s, which saw considerable labor turmoil and their subsequent strikes, were gone. Hollywood's movie industry was booming and for the time being almost anything was permitted to be seen on film but this would change; by the '30s, the Hayes office had put the clothes back on the girls and made all of the characters behave themselves while before the cameras. Prohibition was in effect but those who were thirsty could usually find the cure close by. It could be risky for those who wanted to get into the booze business and those who

went to the mob asking for trouble were sure to find it.

Rail shows going out in 1925 included Ringling-Barnum, Sells-Floto, Hagenbeck-Wallace, John Robinson, Al G. Barnes, Sparks, Christy Bros., Robbins Bros., Gentry-Patterson, Lee Bros., Walter L. Main, Frank J. Taylor and Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Wild West. All of these were flat-car type shows. Gilly railers were E.H. Jones' Cooper Bros., 2 cars, and Chester Monahan's 5-car Gollmar Bros. Later in September, Gollmar was converted to a 10-car, flat-car type, show. All of the flat-car shows paraded at the start of the season with the exception of Ringling-Barnum, Al G. Barnes, Hagenbeck-Wallace, Sells-Floto, and John Robinson.



Front cover of John Robinson's 1925 program featured illustrations of a clown beating a drum and the first John Robinson. The 16-page booklet was in rotogravure and a new size of 6 x 9 was used. It was printed by Standard Gravure Corp., Louisville, Kentucky. Joe Bradbury Collection.

Overland shows, most of them now using a few trucks to augment their wagons, included Mighty Haag, Seils-Serling, Mighty Hooge, W.E. Morgan's Nickel Plate, Ketrow Bros., M.L. Clark and Sons, Orange Bros., Moon Bros., Sam Dock's Keystone Shows, Tom Atkinson's, Bud Anderson, Carl Bros., Leroy's Overland, Clarion Bros., James B. O'Neal, and Rose Killian.

Before getting into the season itself and the route taken by John Robinson and other shows let us make note of a letter in the Pfening Archives which gives a little insight on how the American Circus Corp. handled the routing of its three circuses in 1925. Planning and coordination of the routes actually began a little sooner than is

generally realized. As early as the previous November the John Robinson general agent and traffic manager, Arthur Hopper, had put in considerable work in lining out the new route for the show. Naturally, changes would be caused by a number of factors but regardless, before the end of the previous year, Mugivan and his partners had received the thoughts of their general agents. Arthur Hopper's letter was dated November 29, 1924, and addressed to Mr. Jerry Mugivan, Peru, Ind. It began "Dear Sir and Friend" and read in part:

"Inclosed you will find a copy of the route of the three shows as far as we got on them today. I am sending this to you so that you can see just what the outlook is at this time. At this time the best I can figure out for the Robinson show is to play some of Canada coming out at Montreal (figure to play Montreal on Sunday for the Church—as it is possible to do this provided the Church does not want all of our receipts—but am sure we will find them reasonable. This way we would get away from the high license so what we would give the Church up there would be about what we would pay for license and while I am not positive that we can do business with the Church, I believe that I can. The Robinson route would run through Vermont, New York state, Pennsylvania, and Virginia (in August), then Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, North Carolina and the southeast including Florida and Georgia.

"The trouble with the present routes are as follows, with all the shows going east there is not much room for switching and I really think it is not going to work out so well for both Hagenbeck-Wallace and Sells-Floto to go up into the east as on the present lay down. Sells Floto eats up the main line of the Pennsylvania going east as well as the best towns in Ohio and of course both shows have got to come back west again. With the Sells Floto show going east it will force Hagenbeck-Wallace to play a good many towns second on the come back to the west, also they will play some towns that they played last summer. If it was possible for Sells Floto to play the John Robinson route in the spring (route we played last year), Hagenbeck to play the Sells Floto route (that they played last spring), and John Robinson to play the Hagenbeck route as they played it last spring and go to Virginia in August instead of Michigan as the Hagenbeck show did, it really would keep all of the shows from playing so many repeaters. If routes were played this way then Hagenbeck would play Boston instead of Sells Floto and it would give Hagenbeck a chance to switch around without following Sells Floto. Both Hagenbeck and Sells Floto have played Altoona and Harrisburg since John Robinson. I talked the above over with Mr. Harvey but he seems to think that you are set on the Sells Floto show playing Boston but you can see from the route he is figuring on that Hagenbeck will not have much chance to switch around after he is through with the east. With the Hagenbeck show playing Buffalo on May



30—it puts them a week late in New England and both 101 Ranch and Sparks will have a good chance to beat the Hagenbeck-Wallace show to all of the towns up there. Sells Floto could play Buffalo May 30 if they did not go to Boston and the east. I am simply advising the above as I see it and if you think well of this you can take it up with us later...."

Looking over some of the suggestions made by Hopper originally and then what eventually happened, it is interesting to note that the show never did make it into Canada but it was routed into Virginia in August. Since Canada was out so was Vermont, which obviously would have been the return route from Montreal. Late season stands in the south were pretty much as Hopper suggested. The John Robinson title had long been recognized as a prime asset in southern territory.

The 1925 season opened as planned in West Baden, Indiana, on April 17. The event was covered in the April 25, 1925, *Billboard* in an article headed, "SPLENDOR AND DIVERSITY MARK JOHN ROBINSON CIRCUS PROGRAM. Show Officially Opens 102d Annual Tour With Success at Louisville, Ky.—Animal Acts Are Big Features—Performance Moves With Speed.

"Louisville, Ky., April 18—Old Sol beat down in mid-summer style here this afternoon on the formal start of the 102d annual tour of the John Robinson Circus. The big top, however, was set up for the first time yesterday at West Baden, Ind., the winter quarters of the show, for preliminary showing. That the performance as a whole and attendance here was, to say the least, satisfactory was indicated by the smiles of Manager Sam B. Dill.

In the Land of Peter Pan is the title of the imposing spectacle which opens the big show program. Little Theresa Morales lies on a bench asleep while the King and Queen and Princess of Fairyland pass thru her dream gorgeously panoplied and bringing in their train a ring of dancing fairies, pirates, South Sea Islanders and beasts of the Jungles of Animal Land. After the personnel of the circus had thus been introduced things began to happen in two rings and a steel arena, the program moving with speed.

"Captain Ricardo brought his trained leopards and pumas into the arena while Theresa Morales and Maud Hickey entertained with aerial work above the rings.

"Theo Schroeder then took the arena with his group of polar bears in a posing act, and Mr. and Mrs. Thornton staged a pony drill in each of the rings. Bill Tafe kept the audience shrieking with mirth with his 'basket horse.'

"The football horses, liberty ponies and bucking mules, trained by Mr. Thornton and Wink Weaver, sent the inflated rubbers far and wide among the crowd and then faded for the entrance of Patricia Salmon, formerly of the Ziegfeld Follies, who is the featured prima donna. She had an appealing voice, which was heard to advantage in her yodeling number as she sat on a

snowy white mount and a cluster of white doves fluttered about her.

"Captain Ricardo, stern and masterful with his savage charges, presented Prince, a trained Nubian lion, in some remarkable feats, flanked on either side by a jockey riding act by the Rudynoffs and the McCrees.

"The eyes of the crowd turned skyward for a few thrilling minutes to watch the 16 fair feminine aerialists perform on swinging ladders with an accompaniment sung by Miss Salmon, Adeline Weaver, Hazel Hickey and Eileen Tinkcom.

"Back to the jungle again, all eyes turned toward Nellie Roth and her seven royal Bengal tigers posing in the arena. In the rings was the novel combination of camels and horses doing stunts together, and dogs and monkeys were introduced to ride the horses. Miss Roth was succeeded by Miss Langdon, who superintended a tete-a-tete between a tiger and an elephant. These two natural enemies met with all the appearance of affection.



John Robinson steam boiler wagon on lot, probably at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, May 4-5, 1925. Pfening Archives.

"At this point was injected the comedy clown band assisted by 'Rocks,' the singing mule, which caused mild hysterics among the crowd. Then followed highly successful liberty horse numbers in the rings, with Mr. Thornton and Mr. Rudynoff officiating.

"The versatile, olive-skinned, long-haired Morales Sisters gave a daring exhibition of wirewalking and slides. One of them walked up a slanting guy wire and slid down backwards as the band played La Paloma.

"Cleverly trained were the Riding Fours, two dog and horse acts offered by Mrs. Thornton and Miss Anna Butler. They were the side dishes of the feast of which Captain Ricardo, with his group of lions, was the piece de resistance.

"Both rings gave way while Lorraine Wallace, leather clad, playfully and with such ease that it seemed scarcely an effort, wrestled, rolled and tumbled with her pet tiger.

"The McCrees and the Rudynoffs took

the stage with comedy riding acts, where the greatest skill was exhibited with a maximum of antics purely for laughter—and it succeeded in its purpose.

"Ninety-nine tons of elephants filled the rings and amused, astounded, and entertained with their intelligent posing and tricks, a credit to their trainer, Albert Langdon, and his assistant, Mr. Davis.

"Senorita Piedad, called a phenomenon of the wire, justified her title in a lively dance on a piece of wire that was a masterpiece of balancing. On her right and left the Morales Sisters and the Sin-Sin Chinese were busy with their acrobatic feats, which were excellently done.

"Suddenly the tent seemed filled with prancing, graceful horses, mounted by beautiful girls in costumes that were a flash of color. Singly and together they went thru steps that would do credit to Pavlova and Paul Swann.

"As the circus gathered to its climax the Morales Girls and the Barron Girls did the

ever-charming 'human butterfly' aerial stunt to usher in the fox hunt.

"True to form, in red caps and white riding breeches, most of the circus personnel appeared in the grand finale, the English fox hunt, which was featured with high jumping by 'Cleveland,' ridden by Mrs. Thornton; 'Cloud Inspector,' by Miss Butler; 'Portis,' by Ione Carl; 'Dimples,' by Etta Carreon, and 'Ruby,' a liberty high jumper, and the hounds yelped and tugged at their leashes in the most approved fox-hunt manner.

"In the closing number ponies were lifted high in the air on platforms, from which brilliant fireworks sizzles and flashed.

"The band, a snappy organization in fine fettle the first day out, is under the leadership of Wade Zumwalt, cornetist. [Listed were a total of 20 musicians including the air calliope player.]

"The clown contingent is headed by Bill Stiles. [A total of 18 joeys were listed in clown alley.]

"In the wild west concert appear Carlos Carreon, Dewey Butler, Tom Eles, D.H. Biron, Etta Carreon, Anna Butler, Bobby Brant, Pearl Biron, Hazel Hickey, and Ida Eles.



"Manager Duke Mills has achieved some pleasing new effects in decorations, both inside and outside for the sideshow. His banner display is unusually good and his 'lobby' display of easel pictures of the leading attractions is a clever idea for circusdom. Val Vino, veteran lecturer, looks as young and spry as a kitten. Prof. Officer directs the colored jazz band and Joe Clemons and his minstrel man and misses disport themselves with great abandon. The other attractions are: Chat Cain, the tattooed Adonis; Jolly Ray, who tips the scales at 520 pounds; Frozo, who freezes all over and refuses to be moved; Cloto and Milanda, hula-hula dancers; Prof. Emerson, who claims 7 feet and 7 inches of height; Kiko and Zula, pinheads; the Clark Duo, bag punchers; Princess Joanka, who climbs a ladder of swords; Milly D'Arcy, who plays with reptiles; Bozo, fire eater; Huber, armless painter; Milly Itaska, phrenologist; Sin-Sin, Chinese wonder workers; Say-Har, Australian bushwoman, and Ed Reese, strong man."

The show had a printed program of 16 pages done in rotogravure by the Standard Gravure Corp. of Louisville, Kentucky, which was distributed free. The front cover featured a portrait of original John Robinson and a clown with drum. In addition to the listing of the individual acts the program contained several pages of national advertising. All concessions were listed, from Coca-Cola to balloons to flying birds, and all items were priced at 10 cents. A smaller page size was utilized from that used in 1924. The new size was 6 x 9 inches, which prevailed on through the final John Robinson season of 1930.

After the home opening in West Baden the show moved to Louisville, Kentucky, for performances the following day, then took off a Sunday enroute and was in Danville, Kentucky, for two shows on Monday, April 20. At Danville what is believed to be a precedent in court circles was registered when the circuit court in session there adjourned and attended the matinee performance of John Robinson.

Two additional Kentucky dates were played, Lexington and Ashland. Then the show moved into Ohio at Portsmouth, April 23, which saw excellent business and good afternoons by the *Times* and the *Morning News*. Following stands at Chillicothe, Marietta, and Steubenville, the show continued east into Pennsylvania, playing Washington, Elwood City, Butler, Greensburg, Altoona, Pittsburgh (two days), Connellsville, and Somerset.

The May 9, 1925, *Billboard* said John Robinson had experienced ideal weather and excellent business during the past week. Due to unforeseen delays on the part of the railroads the show did not arrive at Steubenville, Ohio, Sunday, April 26, until 3 p.m. However, this did not dampen the ardor of the townfolks, who had been waiting since sunrise for the arrival of the show. Street car traffic was halted within four blocks of the grounds, so dense were the crowds. Visitors at Marietta, Ohio, included Frank Mahara, manager of the



Sells-Floto Circus brigade, and Mr. Parker, special agent for Sparks Circus. Sideshow manager Duke Mills scheduled a broadcast over the radio when in Pittsburgh. While in Elwood City, Pennsylvania, Ione Carl suffered a painful injury to her left hand and was taken to a hospital in Pittsburgh for treatment.

In the same *Billboard* issue the American Circus Corporation had a large advertisement selling the following animals and circus property which were at Peru quarters. Included were six male lions, from four to eight years old; four female lions, from four to six years old; one female jaguar, four years old; seven female tigers, from six to eight years old; one leopard, five years old; one puma, one year old; four black bears, from one to four years old; one Russian brown bear, two years old; cages, tableau and baggage wagon; air and steam calliopes and other surplus circus property of all kinds. Some of this property would be sold a few months later to Chester Monahan when he converted his 5-car tunnel car show to a 10-car, flat-car type, circus. However, Monahan's newly enlarged show would last only a very short time. The property was then repossessed and again ended up as surplus in the Peru quarters.

The "ideal weather" which the show saw early in the season didn't last long. The weather plus some rail difficulties made it rough tramping in Pennsylvania. The May 16, 1925, *Billboard* reported that rain and cold had been experienced by the show the past week. However, in most of the cities business was remarkably good in spite of this. At Elwood City, Pennsylvania, April 29, the evening performance was held in a veritable cloudburst. It started shortly after the performance began and so the attendance was slightly affected.

Washington, Pennsylvania, was not reached until about 12 o'clock due to delays on the part of the railroad. The matinee did not get off until about 4 p.m. There was considerable misunderstanding among the townfolk as to whether the afternoon performance would be held or not. This somewhat affected the attendance. Night brought out a capacity crowd. A novel sight greeted the showfolk at Butler, Penn-

Horses being unloaded from John Robinson stock cars, season of 1925. Pfening Archives.

sylvania. On arising in the morning and looking out of the car window one for the time thought the circus was still peacefully resting in winter quarters, as a heavy snowstorm was on.

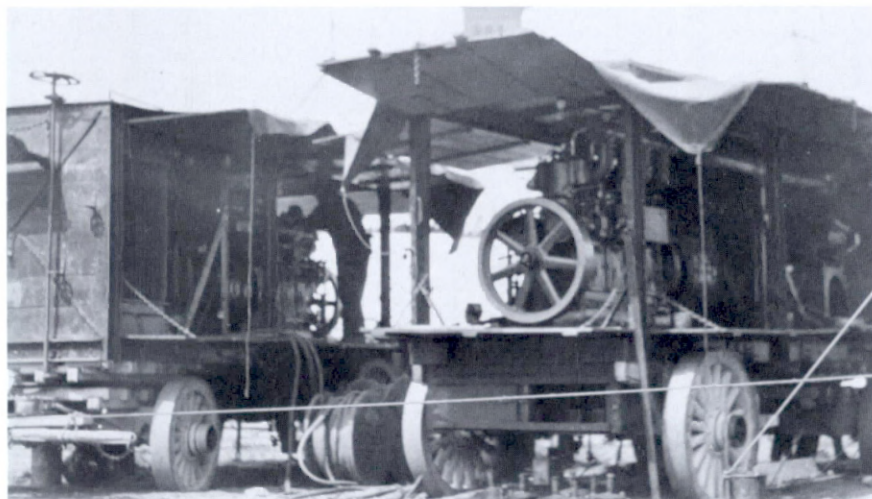
Greensburg, Pennsylvania, May 1, brought the circus the first setback of the season. The lot was in a very bad condition due to heavy rains for several days previously. After a part of the show was on the lot, a storm broke. This made conditions impossible and the performances were at once cancelled. It soon became apparent that the show must be gotten off the lot as soon as possible or serious trouble would be experienced. At Altoona the performances were under the auspices of the Jaffa Shrine and two capacity audiences were in attendance. Rain and more cold were the rule again at the two days in Pittsburgh. However, attendance was big. On the night of May 5 the following broadcast from station KDKA, Pittsburgh: Patricia Salmon, Duke Mills, Wade Zumwalt, Charles Ed Lewis and Mr. Smith.

The show left the Keystone state after its date in Somerset, May 7, and dipped down into Maryland for Cumberland and Hagerstown, but quickly returned to Pennsylvania for dates at Mt. Carmel, Shamokin, Pottsville, Lebanon, York, and Williamsport. A quick trip into New York for a single stand at Elmira, May 18, broke the string of dates briefly but the following day the show was at Lock Haven, Pennsylvania, and remained in that state through May 27 exhibiting at Clearfield, DuBois, Indiana, Pensutawney, Grove City, Meadville, and Erie.

In the meantime officials of the American Circus Corporation, feeling adversely the competition from the new Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Wild West and its popular parade, decided to restore the daily march on all three of the corporation units. The May 23, 1925, *Billboard* ran the following article:

"RESTORING PARADE. On Sells-





Light plant wagons on the John Robinson lot, season of 1925. Pfening Archives.

Floto, John Robinson and Hagenbeck-Wallace Circuses.

"Uniontown, Pa.—May 15—It has been definitely decided by the American Circus Corporation to restore the parade on the Sells-Floto, John Robinson, and Hagenbeck-Wallace circuses as rapidly as possible. This will not necessitate a great deal of work as these shows were framed and equipped last winter for a parade if any affect was shown on business without it. The parade wardrobe has been shipped to the shows from their respective winter quarters. It is not known whether the steam calliopes will be shipped. It may be that only the air calliopes now with the shows will be used in the parade."

Although no photos have turned up showing the John Robinson steam calliope in 1925 it is believed it was sent to join the show. This belief is based on the fact that a large group photo in the Pfening Archives taken on Sells-Floto and positively identified as 1925 pictures the Two Jesters steam calliope, which had evidently been sent from quarters to the show, and if Sells-Floto got their steamer then, it is safe to assume, so did John Robinson and Hagenbeck-Wallace.

The same May 23, 1925, *Billboard* also carried a report from John Robinson which said that rain, and in some instances, severe cold, had been the brand of weather experienced by the show of late. Connellsville, Pennsylvania, May 6, the first stand out of Pittsburgh, brought an ideal day until the night show was about to commence, when a heavy rain fell. However, this city proved the banner stand of the week, attendance being practically capacity.

Somerset, Pennsylvania, made one think that late autumn was in progress, it being so cold that ice had reportedly formed in various places. Mt. Carmel, Pennsylvania, May 11, again brought out the rain coats, a cloudburst here making parts of the lot resemble a lake. In spite of the condition of the lot and another circus following a few days later, a very good night attendance was had.

The *Billboard* also reported that Patricia Salmon was unable to appear at several performances last week due to sickness. Ione Carl had returned from a Pittsburgh hospital, quite recovered from the recent injury to her hand.

Final notes said that the cookhouse under the able supervision of Mr. Davis was handing out the brand of meals that made everyone look forward to the various times of the day that they were in progress. Mrs. Sam Dill was not with the show at present, having returned to her home at Toledo, Ohio, on account of illness.

A separate account of the rainstorm at Connellsville was run saying that the big top was about three-quarters filled at the matinee and in the evening a steady downpour started about 7:30 p.m. but this did not prevent the big top from being well filled with patrons. One of the baggage wagons became stuck in a mud hole on the ballpark lot where the horse and cook tents were pitched, taking 16 horses and an elephant to get it out of the pit.

The *Billboard* continued to provide excellent coverage of the John Robinson tour of Pennsylvania, which for the most part had been extremely difficult tramping. The June 6, 1925, *Billboard* began its article with one positive note, however, reporting that a camel was born shortly after the show got on the lot at Clearfield, Pennsylvania, May 20. The youngster created no end of excitement and interest among the town folk and was the cause of much comment and publicity on the part of the newspapers. The Clearfield paper humorously named it Andy Volstead. The Volstead Act, of course, started the movement toward prohibition and subsequent passage of the constitutional amendment banning the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages. However, the new camel was officially christened Patricia and was the chief attraction in the menagerie at the time.

Ginger Jonson was suddenly taken ill at Punsutawney, Pennsylvania, and for a while it was felt she would have to be left in a hospital but she recovered sufficiently to proceed with the show to the next stand. She later left for her home in Peru, Indiana.

Bernie Griggs was a recent addition to the McCree Family of comedy riders.

A blowdown was narrowly averted at Punsutawney when a severe wind and hailstorm broke in the afternoon. At night as the crowds were leaving after the show the storm broke out anew with a cloudburst. On account of the condition of the lot at Grove City, Pennsylvania, May 25, the night show was abandoned in order to get the show to Meadville in time. The lot was a sea of mud and the wagons were buried up over the hubs in the soft ground. Hotels, rooming houses and restaurants were literally swamped with showfolk Sunday, May 24, at Grove City on account of the unprecedented cold weather. The cookhouse on the lot was virtually deserted and presented a lonesome appearance to those that braved the cold and went to the lot for their meals.

Following Erie, May 27, the show went into New York for one day at Jamestown and two at Buffalo, May 29-30. A Sunday run on the 31st took John Robinson back to Pennsylvania for stands at Oil City, Kittanning, New Kensington, and Latrobe. The show next moved into Ohio for East Liverpool, June 5, but returned the next day for the final two stands in Pennsylvania, New Brighton and Sharon. At last the long weeks which saw so much cold and wet weather in the Keystone State were over and the show moved out for good and began a week of Ohio stands, the first coming at Warren, June 9.

In the meantime there was no definite word in the trade publications as to the exact date and stand the John Robinson street parade was restored. The *Billboard* said the show paraded in Elmira, New York, May 18, although one had not been previously advertised. Possibly this was the initial parade. In any event the daily march became a feature of circus day on the John Robinson Circus for the remainder of the 1925 season.

The *Billboard* had fine coverage of Robinson activities nearly every week. The June 13, 1925, issue told of the several stands in New York state and the final dates in Pennsylvania. Erie, Pennsylvania, Jamestown and Buffalo, New York, proved to be excellent stands for the show. At Buffalo there were three turnaways and capacity was the rule for each performance in the three named cities. Mayor Schwab of Buffalo was presented with a leopard. A humorous incident occurred in the way the animal was delivered to the mayor. It was formally charged with being intoxicated and as a result was placed under arrest and lodged in a cell in the police station near the circus grounds. Under a plea from the mayor it was given its freedom and put in charge of Captain Ricardo of the circus. He placed it in a box and the leopard was taken to a zoo where it was to be in the charge of the City of Buffalo.

An elaborate dinner was served in the cookhouse Decoration Day, May 30. The tables were beautifully decorated and streamers of national colors hung from the top of the tent. A pretty souvenir, which consisted of an American flag mounted on



a pin, was presented to each person. George Davis, in charge of the cookhouse, and John Stevens, head waiter, were congratulated on the success of the holiday affair.

Oil City, Pennsylvania, in spite of the usual lull following Decoration Day and another circus having appeared in the city a short time previously, showed up with circus enthusiasm still at its height and two big audiences attended.

Final notes said that Mrs. Sam Dill was back on the show after having been away for several days on account of illness and Ruby Chapin of the McCree Family of comedy riders was left in the hospital in Buffalo suffering from effects of a severe cold. She was expected to rejoin the show in a few days. Duke Mills' sideshow proved more and more popular each day, as was shown by the continuous succession of shows in each town.

A total of six stands were played in Ohio. After Warren, the show visited Alliance, Wooster, Ashland, Lorain, and Toledo, then headed to Michigan for dates at Monroe, Mt. Clemens, Flint, Bay City, Owosso, Kalamazoo, Battle Creek, Charlotte, Ionia, Allegan, and Three Rivers.

The July 4, 1925, *Billboard* reported that good business had favored John Robinson for the past several days, turnaways being registered at Mt. Clemens and Flint. At Mt. Clemens 1,700 children were the guests of the local Kiwanis Club at the matinee. The children marched to the circus in a body, headed by a band and an escort of the local Kiwanis. A reporter from the *Flint Journal* wishing to gain a practical knowledge of the art of clowning had the experience of being an actual clown at the performance. He succeeded so well that he was entertained by clown alley afterwards.

Other items stated that Jerry Mugivan visited the show at Toledo, Ohio, June 16, and the owners of the Ziedman and Pollie Shows, a large railroad carnival, visited at Lorain, Ohio. Leonard Karsh, in charge of the show's front door, and his assistants handled the big crowd in an excellent manner. The jams were quickly broken due to the fine supervision of Mr. Karsh. Patricia Salmon had the misfortune of having a bone in her leg broken by being kicked by a horse. After being out of a few performances she gamely took up her part again as prima donna of the big show. Wade Zumwalt's concert band received some very flattering press notices.

When the show played Iona, Michigan, on June 25, a special performance was given for the inmates of the Michigan State Reformatory. A goodly part of the circus was taken out to the institution. About 30 large touring cars and trucks were used to transport the personnel and paraphernalia for the show. At the conclusion of the performance the inmates all rose and give three rousing cheers in appreciation. Later a letter was received from the entire body of inmates expressing their thanks to the circus.

A note in the July 11, 1925, *Billboard* said the boys in the John Robinson adver-

tising cars were hitting it lucky by being in big cities for the holidays. On July 4 the car was in Cincinnati to bill the show's appearance in that city scheduled for July 20-21, and the boys found enough time off to go over to Latonia, Kentucky, to see the horses run. And on Decoration Day, May 30, the car was in Detroit for a short lay-over, enough time so the boys could cross the river to Windsor, Ontario, and put a few legal drinks under their belts before the car resumed its journey to bill the various Michigan dates.

## CAIRO FRIDAY SEPT. 4

**STREET PARADE 11 A. M.**

HAS KEPT FAITH WITH THE  
PUBLIC FOR OVER A CENTURY

**GREATEST OF ALL  
WILD ANIMAL ACTS**

PRESENTED BY CAPTAIN RICARDO-  
THEODORE SCHROEDER  
AND OTHER NOTED  
SUBJUGATORS

**JOHN  
ROBINSON'S  
CIRCUS 102<sup>nd</sup> YEAR**

THE ONLY  
**Wrestling Tiger**  
IN THE UNIVERSE

**99 TONS OF GIANT  
ELEPHANTS**

**2 SHOWS DAILY 2 & 8 P.M.  
DOORS OPEN 1 & 7 P.M.**

This 1925 newspaper ad for the Cairo, Illinois, date featured wild animal trainers Ricardo and Schroeder. Pfening Archives.

After a Sunday run the Robinson show moved into Indiana with the initial stand coming at Gary on June 29, which was followed by Michigan City the next day. At Michigan City John Robinson had a day and date with the Rodgers and Harris Circus, which was playing a five-day stand under the auspices of the Laporte County Ku Klux Klan. Location of the Klan circus was on a lot alongside Floyd Fitzsimmons' big prize-fight arena and in close proximity to the center of town. It was reported that the city and surrounding county was plastered with the bills of the two shows. The

Rogers and Harris show had recently finished a successful nine-day engagement under Klan auspices in Indianapolis and also had previously played Klan dates in Evansville, Fort Wayne and Kokomo. In the mid-1920s the Klan was a powerful organization in Indiana as well as other mid-western states. The various local groups under coordination of the central headquarters often sponsored circuses playing stands usually of about a week. A number of so-called fraternal circuses were organized especially to play these dates. The Elks Club, Moose, and other orders often sponsored circuses in those days. The Shrine also was a pioneer of sponsored dates but usually their shows were presented in buildings in the winter, whereas the Klan's, Elks', etc. came during the regular circus season, at times in front of grandstands, and sometimes under canvas. Equipment of the T.A. Wolfe Shows, a railroad carnival, which was repossessed by Mugivan & Bowers and sent to Peru, was used to frame a fraternal-type show which played multi-date stands in 1925. Later it folded and returned to the Peru quarters. Bill Woodcock, Sr., told me that while in Peru about 1926 he had seen one of the huge, carnival-type, box wagons which had been used on this show and it was still lettered "Klan Circus."

After only two Indiana dates, John Robinson returned to Michigan to play Benton Harbor, then came back into Indiana for Elkhart, and then went back to Michigan where stands were played at Sturgis, Hillsdale, Albion, and Adrian.

John Robinson spent several weeks of jumping back and forth between states, much of it no doubt caused by the tremendous amount of opposition between various shows in 1925. On July 8 the show moved into Indiana for a single date at Auburn, then proceeded on to Ohio for Bryan, Fremont, Fostoria, and Lima, after which the route took it back into Indiana for four additional dates at Muncie, Marion, Kokomo, and Anderson.

The show returned to Ohio at Hamilton, July 18, then after a Sunday off, played two days in Cincinnati, July 20-21. Additional Ohio stands at Dayton, Springfield, Barnesville, and Cambridge took the show eastward to West Virginia, where a tour of that state began at Wheeling, July 27.

With all of this moving back and forth between several states, news of the John Robinson show in the trade publication temporarily dried up and few, if any, reports were seen in print. But when the show got to Cincinnati the *Billboard's* local office sent out a reporter to look it over. His report was printed in the August 1, 1925, issue.

The account noted that Old Jupiter Pluvius shed tears aplenty in Cincy July 20 and the John Robinson Circus was a victim of his pranks. On that day the Queen City had one of its worst storms, it breaking just about matinee time. At that time were a number of circusgoers on hand and they represented a fairly good crowd. The rain continued during the afternoon and evening and, of course, this had a decided effect



on the evening attendance. It was surprising to learn that more than 1,000 fans had braved the elements to see the night show. The next day the show was on the Norwood lot and there were intermittent showers nearly all day. The matinee was well attended, there being about a two-thirds house, and in the evening it was near capacity.

In consideration of the fact that the John Robinson Circus was an amusement enterprise of Cincinnati origin, the city authorities waived the customary restriction in such cases and granted a permit for a parade on the morning of July 20. Since the program was dealt with at length in a review of the season's opening performance, the reviewer made only these brief comments:

"The program is a combination of wild and domestic animal and circus acts, presented in two rings and a steel arena. It is a very pleasing performance, put over in a snappy manner, and no act at any time becomes boring. 'Peter Pan in Animal Land,' a beautiful fairyland spec, opened the performance with Patricia Salmon, former Ziegfield Follies beauty, in the leading feminine role, and Miss Salmon caught the fancy of the audience with her beauty and ability to sing. E.V. Dixon had the principal male singing role, which he handled in an excellent manner. Among the acts that commanded particular attention were the lion riding horse worked by Captain Ricardo; swinging ladder display; Nellie Roth, with seven Royal Bengal tigers; the 'rotation' horses in both rings; Ricardo with eight lions; Three Morales Sisters, in hair, teeth and foot slides; Theo Schroeder, with a group of polar bears; the McCrees and Rudynoffs in comedy riding acts; elephants under the direction of Albert Langdon; Senorita Piedad, in a lively dance on the wire that was a masterpiece of balancing, and the big display of menage horses and riders, a very beautiful number. Immediately following the big show came the Wild West concert, at the head of which is Carlos Carreon, who presented a rattling good performance."

The article noted the management was in the very capable hands of Sam B. Dill, and equestrian director Robert Thornton saw to it that the program moved with swiftness. The band, a snappy organization, was under the leadership of Wade Zumwalt. Duke Mills, in charge of the sideshow, had a good line of attractions and had some pleasing new effects in decorations, both inside and out, his banner display being unusually good.

Robert Sperry was much in evidence around the show, announcing the big show features and having charge of the concert.

Billy Exton, advertising bannerman, who was having a most profitable season, visited the *Billboard* offices during the local engagement.

The article concluded by noting that Jerry Mugivan drove down from Peru and was on both of the local lots. Among visitors were the Robinson family, including Gil, Mr. and Mrs. John G. Robinson and John G. Robinson, Jr.

Very little had appeared in the trade publications concerning the Robinson street parade after it was restored other than some who said it was not as elaborate as in former years. Probably this was because there were not as many tableau wagons and/or cage wagons as in 1924 and earlier. Gordon Potter has in his files some interesting data on the 1925 John Robinson show, including a few parade items, which are as follows.

# EXCURSION!

## TO

# JOHN ROBINSON'S CIRCUS

GREATEST TRAINED WILD ANIMAL CIRCUS ON EARTH

## JOHNSON CITY

## WEDNESDAY, AUG. 19

### THE

### East Tennessee and Western North Carolina Railroad Company

### Linville River Railway Company

WILL OPERATE SPECIAL TRAINS ON FOLLOWING SCHEDULE

**RATE--ONE FULL FARE AND 1-4 FOR THE ROUND TRIP**

	Eastern Standard Time
Lv. Boone	6:30 A. M.
" Shuff's Mills	7:15 A. M.
" Linville	8:05 A. M.
" Pinnola	Lv. 7:25 A. M.
" Montezuma	8:20 A. M.
" Newland	8:27 A. M.
" Vale	8:31 A. M.
" Minneapolis	8:41 A. M.
Ar. Cranberry	8:50 A. M.
Lv. Cranberry	9:00 A. M.
" Elk Park	9:10 A. M.
" Shell Creek	9:20 A. M.
" Roan Mountain	9:35 A. M.
" Crabtree	9:43 A. M.
" White Rock	9:50 A. M.
" Blevins	9:55 A. M.
" Hampton	10:15 A. M.
" Valley Forge	10:20 A. M.
" Elizabethton	10:35 A. M.
" Watauga Point	10:45 A. M.
" Milligan College	10:50 A. M.
Ar. Johnson City	11:00 A. M.

Returning Special Trains Leave Johnson City after Afternoon Performance, and Run to Boone. For those wishing to see Night Performance, tickets will be good returning following day, August 20th, on Regular Trains.

Tickets and Additional Information Furnished by Agents E. T. & W. N. C. R. R. and L. R. Ry.

## GRAND FREE STREET PARADE

A special excursion herald, printed in red, listed trains from 20 different towns to Johnson City, Tennessee, for the August 19, 1925, date of the John Robinson Circus. Pfening Archives.

The show had 10 elephants, 6 camels, 10 cages, 3 parade (tableau) wagons, 66 head of baggage stock and 29 head of ring stock in the parade. Other info said the show used a 4-center-pole big top, had a 12-tier grandstand, and 12 tiers of blue (general admission) seats.

As usual for those days John Robinson

had a fair share of opposition from other shows for much of the season. Some of the closest had come from Sparks in Pennsylvania, where both shows had played Mt. Carmel and Oil City and were very close together in a number of other stands where billing paper overlapped. Robinson's route was now taking the show rapidly across West Virginia into Virginia where Sparks had played several of the scheduled cities back in April. The span of several months was such that little or no effect would be experienced. In the prosperous days of the mid-20s families often afforded the luxury of two, or even more, circuses a season.

After Wheeling other West Virginia stands were at Clarksburg, Weston, Elkins, Grafton, and Keyser. Then the show went into Virginia for eight dates, the first being at Winchester, August 3.

The August 8, 1925, *Billboard* said that while the Robinson show was at Kokomo, Indiana, July 16, one of the baby camels was christened by the Shriners of that city. The members of the order attended the evening performance in a body and the christening was a feature during the regular program. Visitors at Kokomo were numerous, as it was near the show's winterquarters at Peru. Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Mugivan were on the lot that day, as were a great number of friends and relatives of the show's personnel.

At Cambridge, Ohio, July 25, a severe rainstorm struck the city at about 6 p.m. The lot was quite a ways out from the center of the city and dirt roads, newly built, led to same. As a result of the rain the road was softened to such an extent that when the heavy wagons hit it they sank in hub deep. After heroic efforts on the part of the employees, the show finally reached the railroad yards. They labored incessantly through the night and when the last wagon was placed on the train it was 6:30 Sunday morning. The arrival in Wheeling, West Virginia, of course was very late, it being about 1:30 p.m. Sunday before the unloading got underway. Lot conditions in that city were ideal as the state fairground was used. Attendance was big, the night show finding the audience sitting on the straw and standing in all portions of the big top.

A three-mile haul to the lot at Clarksburg, July 28, and a heavy rain forced the cancellation of the parade. The afternoon show was also somewhat delayed in opening.

The show moved into Virginia at Winchester, August 3, then played Harrisonburg, Staunton, Charlottesville, Richmond, Newport News, Norfolk, Petersburg, Lynchburg, and Danville, dipped down into North Carolina for Winston-Salem August 14, then returned to Virginia with dates at Martinsville, Roanoke, and Pulaski. The show went into Tennessee for a single stand, Johnson City, August 19, and came back immediately into the Old Dominion to exhibit at Bristol, Wytheville, and East Radford, which was the final stand in the state. It was August and John Robinson was in Virginia just as general agent, Arthur Hopper, had pro-





posed to Mugivan in his letter the previous November.

The August 22, 1925, *Billboard* noted the Robinson show had entered Virginia at Winchester and played through the historic and beautiful Shenandoah Valley, where at every stand business was good. The show went into the former Confederate capital at Richmond, August 7, for the season's greatest day to that point, where big crowds attended both shows. The governor of the state, along with numerous local officials, was on hand.

The show registered the largest night's business of the season so far at Norfolk, August 10. The big top was jammed until the crowd stood at the very gate of the main entrance. It was a remarkable record in the face of an extremely hot day and night.

In the same *Billboard* was another Robinson item which said the show's opposition brigade, headed by Si H. Semon, manager, and his crew of 10 men, arrived in Nashville, Tennessee, in the morning of August 13 to work the city which the show was scheduled to play on September 10. Semon landed the large wall of the *Nashville Tennessean* for a huge daub, something no other show had been able to do. The article also said the Robinson bill crews had contracted and covered with paper many of the choice downtown locations in Memphis for the show's stand there on Labor Day, September 7.

Additional Robinson news came in the August 29, 1925, *Billboard* in, which it was reported that Roanoke, Virginia, August 17, at the matinee gave the show probably the largest turnaway in history. Standing room only announcements were made long before the performance got under way and finally it became necessary to close the gates entirely.

At Lynchburg, August 12, members of the National Elks Home at Bedford, Virginia, were guests of the circus. Lon

**Tableau wagon arriving on the John Robinson lot, season of 1925. It was used as a ticket-office wagon and would be suitable for parade purposes. Joe Bradbury Collection.**

Williams, former well-known general agent and now at the home, was among those present, as were many other former circus and amusement world personnel.

During the matinee at Winston-Salem, North Carolina, August 14, a blowdown was narrowly averted. The wind all of a sudden assumed the proportions of a gale and, coupled with a regular deluge of rain, it spread terror among the audience and some of the animals. For a time it looked as if a general panic would ensue, but everyone connected with the show jumped to the duty of reassuring the frightened ones; with the subsiding of the storm all became normal again.

Following the Virginia tour the show backtracked somewhat on its route into the state by returning to West Virginia for stands in Bluefield and Williamson, then moving on back into Ohio for two dates, Ironton, and again into Cincinnati to play on a lot in the east section of the city. It would be the third day the show had played in Cincinnati. There had not been a circus on the east end lot for many years. The show's management said it would be sort of a tryout inasmuch as it would be difficult to obtain a suitable lot in Norwood in the future. A building was going up at the present Norwood lot.

The trade publications didn't cover the movement of the show after it left Virginia until Cincy was reached; however two very interesting items appeared in the *Billboard*. A letter from Elmer A. Leffel said that he caught John Robinson earlier in

**John Robinson baggage wagon enroute to lot, season of 1925. Pfening Archives.**



the season when it played Springfield, Ohio, July 23, and found the performance to be very good but the parade was not up to the standard of former days. He further noted that Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Wild West played Springfield, August 10, using the Wheldon Field lot, and gave excellent satisfaction. Leffel added that John Robinson played to fair business while the 101 Ranch had big houses.

A great photograph appeared in the August 29, 1925, *Billboard* but unfortunately, due to the low grade of newsprint used by the magazine in those days, is not suitable for a reprint here. It showed the mayor of Buffalo, New York, seated on the back of Big Victor, the hippo, called "Congo" in the cutline, ready to take a ride on the huge varmit when the show played the city back on May 29-30. In back is a titled baggage wagon clearly showing the light color of the wagon sides (yellow/cream) and darker lettering (red).

As was always the case, whenever a show played the Cincinnati area the *Billboard* would send out a man from its office to take an in-depth look at it. Such was the case as John Robinson made its second visit into the city of the season and would play a third date. The report came in the September 5, 1925, *Billboard*, headlined "FIRST CIRCUS IN 25 YEARS OR MORE. John Robinson Show Finds New Lot in East End of Cincinnati a Winner." The text read in part:

"A lot entirely new to the circus was broken in by the John Robinson show when it appeared in the East End of Cincinnati at the foot of Donham Avenue Thursday afternoon and evening, August 27. This was the first circus to show in that section of Cincinnati in probably 25 years or more. The John Robinson Circus when it was owned by "Governor" John F. Robinson used to show there in those days on a lot two or three squares east of the present showgrounds, which are located just about a square from the East End street car line and are passed by the Cincinnati, Georgetown, and Portsmouth traction line. These grounds were used by carnivals for the first time last year, when early in the season the Brown & Dyer Shows played there, followed by the Zeidman & Pollie Shows several months later.

"This was a return engagement for the John Robinson Circus in Cincinnati in five weeks time, the show having appeared in Cumminsville and Norwood July 20 and 21 respectively. The weather was 'made to order' for the return date, and while the matinee wasn't anything big, the attendance was fair and probably as good as could be expected. At night tho there was an almost capacity house, and Buster Cronin, who was looking after the management of the show during the absence of Manager Sam B. Dill, expressed himself as well satisfied with the engagement. An hour or so after the big show started the midway was well filled, many of whom probably didn't have the price of admission to the big show.

"Having been so long since most of the people who were in attendance saw a cir-



cus, they just 'ate it up' so to speak, both at the afternoon and night performances. The program, which held attention throughout, was about the same as when the show appeared in Cincinnati earlier in the season, if anything better, and it seemed to move with even greater speed and smoothness than that which marked the performances at Cumminsville and Norwood, which speaks well for Equestrian Director Robert Thornton. The Wild West concert or aftershow also went over well at each performance, the attendance at night being particularly good. The sideshow with a fine line of attractions, under the management of Duke Mills, did fair in the afternoon and a big business at night.

"The whole show was reviewed in detail when it opened the season, so a review will not be attempted here, the main features, as stated above, remaining about the same. The announcing is in the hands of E.V. Dixon and Robert Sperry and capably done. S.J. Clauson still handles the press back with the show. Herbert Duval looks after the adjusting end, and Wink Weaver is in his third year with the show.

"Jerry Mugivan was expected on the show at Cincinnati, but failed to appear. Sam B. Dill was at Peru, Indiana at the time, in fact has been there for about 10 days."

The show next moved into Indiana for stands at Connersville, Seymour, Bedford, Bloomington, and Vincennes, then went to Illinois for two dates, Harrisburg and Cairo, after which came one day in Kentucky at Paducah. A Sunday run next moved the show train to Tennessee and stands at Memphis, Paris, Clarksville, and Nashville.

Venturing on into the deep south, John Robinson entered Alabama but played only two stands, Decatur and Birmingham, before returning to Tennessee, hitting Chattanooga, Knoxville, and Morristown. During this stretch of the route the show was making long runs and playing in the biggest cities. After the Tennessee tour the show spent the next few weeks in both Carolinas, moving back and forth between the two states. Asheville, September 17, was the first date in North Carolina, which was followed by Hickory and Salisbury. Then came a run into South Carolina for Greenville, Anderson, and Greenwood. A single date in Georgia was played at Augusta, September 24; then it was a return to South Carolina with stands at Columbia and Rock Hill. Ten additional dates in North Carolina followed—Charlotte, High Point, Burlington, Durham, Raleigh, Goldsboro, Rocky Mount, Wilson, Wilmington, and Fayetteville. After good solid coverage of the best dates in that state, the show vacated it for good and moved fast southward, stopping in South Carolina only long enough to play Florence and Charleston. Then it was a long Sunday run to Florida.

In late August and early September, parts of the South suffered from one of the worst droughts and prolonged hot spells ever recorded. Crops in north Georgia especially were literally burned up. Old timers



**John Robinson baggage wagon on the lot, season of 1925. Joe Bradbury Collection.**

still recall the time in September 1925 when they could walk across the Chattahoochee River at Atlanta. Many smaller streams did completely dry up. The drought and hot weather was widespread in the south, even extending up into Tennessee. Fortunately John Robinson moved into the area right when it was breaking.

The September 26, 1925, *Billboard* said that John Robinson's business picked up when the heat wave was broken. The article mentioned that at Nashville, Tennessee, September 10, the terrible heat wave and drought was broken, much to the relief of all, and business with the John Robinson Circus increased correspondingly with the change of weather. Birmingham, September 12, gave the show an all-day rain, further giving relief to the heat- and drought-oppressed section. Two good houses were on hand there. Louis Chase, manager of Lee Bros. Circus, and his wife visited John Robinson at Decatur, Alabama, that show also playing an extensive route through the South. On September 13 at Chattanooga a number of the Robinson troupers availed themselves of the opportunity to visit the historic battlefields of

the Civil War in and about the city. The night performances in both Chattanooga and Knoxville were sellouts. A portion of the huge crowds was forced to be seated on the straw. James Albanese, the treasurer of the show, was rapidly recovering from an operation for appendicitis at his home in Columbus, Ohio. Legal Adjuster Herbert Duval resigned his connection with the show in Chattanooga to take care of pressing business in Little Rock, Arkansas. W.H. Colp of Hagenbeck-Wallace came on to take over Duval's duties with John Robinson.

Rather skimpy reports came from the show as it moved into the Carolinas. One short note said that John Robinson had some good days in South Carolina and is said to have done a big business at Salisbury, North Carolina, September 19. Another good day came at Columbia, South Carolina, September 25, and the *State* carried an afternotice with a history of the early visits of the Robinsons to that city in former years, running back to the days of the old Robinsons.

While in the Carolinas, the governors of both states visited the show. Governor McLean of North Carolina and his party saw the show at Raleigh, October 2, and at Columbia, South Carolina, Governor McLeod and his group were entertained. A

**Closeup of John Robinson baggage wagon on the lot, season of 1925, showing detail of construction and paint and lettering scheme. The show's baggage**

**wagons were painted light yellow (cream) with red lettering. Many also carried the decorative shield shown here. Joe Bradbury Collection.**





short *Billboard* notice said that the *State* newspaper in Columbia gave a nice plug for Wade Zumwalt's concert band. Another item stated that Nellie D'Arcy, who handled the pythons, boa constrictors, and other reptiles in Duke Mills' sideshow, was confined to the car for several days on account of illness, but she quickly recovered and took her place in the kid show.

The October 3, 1925, *Billboard* said that Sam B. Dill had returned to the show after four weeks' absence. He was at Peru, Indiana, on business for the American Circus Corporation. Other items reported that equestrian director Bob Thornton had the misfortune of being almost blinded by being accidentally struck in the eyes with his whip. He was progressing favorably and it was believed his eyesight would not be affected. Joe Wallace had assumed the duties of 24-hour agent in place of E.R. Dameron, who left the show. M. McCoy filled Wallace's former position of traffic officer. The menage act had been receiving some very flattering press notices of late. Comment had been made of the clever execution of the various numbers and the fine appearances of the entire assembly.

as Mighty Haag and M.L. Clark could be troublesome at times. The take for any and all shows depended on how well the crops did. If it was too wet, too dry, or the boll weevil too hungry, it meant slim pickings. Fletcher Smith, one of the more colorful of the circus press boys of the time, had an interesting piece in the October 10, 1925, *Billboard* which was titled "Conditions in the South." It went on to say that conditions that fall in the South were in some sections better than last year, but on the whole the shows were doing business only in spots and the yield of cotton was about 60 percent of previous years. Smith observed the sections that had started to raise tobacco in South Carolina and Georgia had had wonderful success and there was a big crop that year. It was reported that North Carolina had a poor cotton crop, but it was estimated that the yield still would be more than a million bales; and as there was a shortage of pickers, placards were posted in all of the South Carolina post offices urging pickers, both male and female, to come to North Carolina and help get in the crop. The yield of tobacco in the eastern part of the state was bet-

Mississippi gave out the information that the crops were only fair.

Smith concluded by saying that up to that time the black minstrel shows had not made their customary appearance to give opposition at night to the circuses. The few repertoire shows in this section were doing only fair business. The Ona Williams Company jumped from Reidsville, North Carolina, to Dillon, South Carolina, and opened to only fair houses. Southern Georgia was developing into a great tobacco country and should in a few years outdo the North Carolina area. Throughout the South conditions were really just fair; and in sections where there had been a good crop, old debts of the past two years had eaten up a good percentage of the money. While not as good as two years ago or even the last year, the circuses had not lost any money and some of them had enjoyed a steady business since they crossed the line.

Even though Fletcher Smith opined business in the South would be only fair, quite a few shows routed into the area to take their chances. The October 31, 1925, *Billboard* said that Georgia would see four circuses. Christy Bros. and Lee Bros. had concluded their tour of the state doing big business. Early in November the John Robinson Circus would make a few stands in south Georgia, to be followed by the Sparks show, which would wind up the circus season in that state. John Robinson had a brigade busy in opposition work, but the Sparks show, it was said, used only an opposition ad in the newspapers.

By very skillful routing John Robinson beat the pack of shows into Florida. It entered the state for two days in Jacksonville, October 12-13, several weeks ahead of Sparks, which also planned to spend considerable time in the Sunshine State. Robinson next moved to Orlando for a single day, then to Tampa for two days, October 15-16. One day in Bradenton came next, and it was followed by another two-day stand in St. Petersburg, October 19-20. A move across the state put the show in Lakeland, Bartow, Sanford, and Palatka; then came a long Sunday run over the Florida East Coast Railroad to Miami, where three days were scheduled, October 26-28. There was some difficulty in the move to Miami and the train didn't get in until late on Monday, show date, too late for a matinee but an evening performance was given starting at 10 p.m. Just what the trouble was with the FEC RR was never fully explained; but a rather cryptic report published in the November 7, 1925, *Billboard* said despite the handicapping efforts of persons otherwise interested, the John Robinson Circus had been moving as scheduled and playing every stand contracted, as the Florida East Coast Railroad refused to cancel the move. Evidently someone was trying to sabotage the movement of the show, possibly the unions. The FEC Railroad had a long history of union trouble. Possibly some rival show complained of the poor condition of the Robinson cars, hoping the railroad would refuse to move the train. In any event whatever the trouble was and the long hours it took



This unusual litho was designed and printed by the Erie Litho Co. for the Robinson show in 1925. Pfening Archives.

A colt had recently been born to the smallest of the aerial ponies. The animal attracted widespread attention and exclamations of surprise were heard from all viewing it. Rumors were current for a while that Asheville, North Carolina, would bar the show on account of a shortage of water. However, these rumors were without foundation. A good matinee with a capacity night house came during the Asheville stand.

In 1925 circuses played the South in the fall and business was almost entirely geared to the various crop conditions of the area. John Robinson was the American Circus Corporation's principal unit to make a play for natives' spare quarters but other small and medium-size railers also got into the act, notably Sparks, Christy Bros., the new No. 2 Christy show, Lee Bros., and the new King brothers railer, Walter L. Main. Several very strong overland shows such

ter than usual and the shows in that section were doing a good business. The eastern section of South Carolina was in good shape with good cotton and tobacco crops.

Western South Carolina was burned up and no shows were in that section that fall. Even Spartanburg was going without a circus for the first time in years.

The northern part of Georgia was in poor shape and had even received assistance from other sections of the state. What little crop there was burned up. South Georgia was in fine shape and the largest crops in years of cotton and tobacco were harvested.

Conditions reported by the government and agents who had been in Alabama and





Cages on the John Robinson lot being readied for the morning street parade, season of 1925. Note the rather plain decorations which were typical of the show's cages that season. Pfening Archives.

to get the train from Palatka to Miami, the show was able to make all of its Florida stands. The same *Billboard* article also said the show did excellent business in Miami on both the second and third days and that there was a large advance sale for West Palm Beach, which was to be played on October 26.

The November 7, 1925, *Billboard* carried a story about the death of a John Robinson elephant in a burning stock car and listed the name of the animal as "Mary." Therein lies a problem. We cannot account for an elephant by that name on John Robinson in 1925. The article could not have been mistaken in the name as the elephants listed in 1925 were again on the show in 1926. Chang Reynolds, who has furnished the elephant information for this article, has the following to say.

"There is one peculiar note regarding the John Robinson elephant herd in 1925. This is in reference to the copy of the article from the *Billboard*, November 7, 1925, regarding the elephant Mary that burned to death in the bull car fire. Buckles Wood-

cock's list of Corporation elephants lists two bulls named Mary—one was on Sells-Floto and later was shot by the mayor of Lewiston, Idaho, during a stampede in that city and the other was the Mary on Gollmar Bros. Circus. I have never been able to locate a Mary on the John Robinson Circus for 1925 or on Hagenbeck-Wallace for the years previous. Ted Gallup who was with Corporation elephant herds during the 1920s could not account for this elephant on the Robinson show or for the fire either. He said the only bull car fire he ever heard of was the one at the Montgomery quarters in the spring of 1923 where no animals were lost. I covered that in my article on the John Robinson Circus, 1923. In summary, I can't account for an elephant named Mary on John Robinson Circus in 1925. It could, I suppose, be some bull picked up on tour but if so, Gallup and Woodcock haven't noted it."

Here is the article in question. "ELEPHANT DIES IN FIRE. Animal Trapped in 'Bull Car' of John Robinson Circus—Robert Daugherty Injured. "Miami, Fla. Oct 30—'Mary,' highly trained elephant of the John Robinson Circus, was burned to death here at midnight on Monday in a fire. The elephant had been suffering from rheumatism the last three weeks and was confined to the bull car, attendants being instructed to watch the car day and night. The 'bull' man left the car but a few minutes to eat when the circus people, returning from the grounds, noticed that the elephant car was ablaze. The

fire department extinguished the fire, but the car was almost a total loss. It was rebuilt in two days at the Miami Shops and is again part of the train. The elephant was buried in the watery grave of Biscayne Bay.

A final note to the Miami stand was that John Robinson would be the last circus to use the Luna Park lot in the heart of the city. The lot, now valued at \$7 million, was soon to receive building construction on the site. After Miami the show then moved northward fast, playing West Palm Beach, Fort Pierce, and Daytona, October 31, which was the final stand in Florida. During the fall of 1925 northern Florida and southern Georgia had suffered from an epidemic of cattle ticks, which were suspected of causing various diseases commonly known as hoof and mouth. This can be deadly for circus routing as many coun-

John Robinson midway, season of 1925. Note general admission (red) ticket wagon and concession stand at right, marquee in center. Joe Bradbury Collection.

John Robinson midway, season of 1925. Note general admission (red) ticket wagon and concession stand at right, marquee in center. Joe Bradbury Collection.

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John Robinson midway, season of 1925. Note general admission (red) ticket wagon and concession stand at right, marquee in center. Joe Bradbury Collection.

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ties, even states, could and would require all live stock with a circus to be dipped in water vats treated with chemicals to combat the ticks. Worse still, certain areas could be quarantined where shows could not enter or even be stranded in them. At Jacksonville, during the Sunday run to Georgia on November 1, all of the Robinson stock were dipped in the vats. Then the show continued on into Georgia, where performances were given at Brunswick, November 2, which was followed by Waycross, Valdosta, and Albany.

The show was scheduled to conclude the season in Moultrie, Georgia, on November 6 but ran into a situation which required cancellation of the stand. Colquitt County, where Moultrie is located, had experienced a tick outbreak some time back and in 1923 the county was certified as tick free. However, a few weeks before, several ticks were found in the lower edge of the county and the state veterinary department placed a quarantine. The show had been assured by the federal inspector who supervised the dipping at Jacksonville that the show would be able to play Moultrie without a second dip, but Dr. Peter F. Bahnsen, the Georgia vet, said differently. He said that if the show did play Moultrie all stock would have to be dipped again before the train could depart. With that decision in effect the show then proceeded to cancel Moultrie, declaring that a second dip in such a short time would be injurious to the stock. So, on short notice, Cordele, Georgia, was scheduled for November 6, the concluding stand of the 1925 season.

The November 14, 1925, *Billboard* told the story of the Robinsons' season close at Cordele, noting the show had played 175 days and would return to the quarters in West Baden, Indiana. The 102nd tour just concluded was one of the most successful in the history of the earth's oldest circus. Miami was the only three-day stand of the season and two-dayers were at Buffalo, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Jacksonville, Tampa, and St. Petersburg.

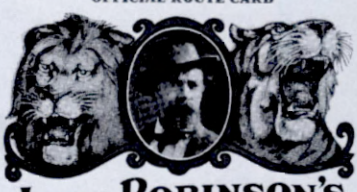
The article said that practically all of the executives and personnel which left the winter quarters in West Baden in April remained with the show until the final performance. Sam B. Dill added to his reputation as an astute manager. Several times during the year weather and railroad conditions tested the loyalty of the employees, especially in Florida, but never once was one workman or performer found lacking in his desire to put across the John Robinson Circus. During the last few weeks it was necessary on several occasions to give three performances a day, but there was not a murmur from anyone as to the extra work.

Robert Thornton, equestrian director, was called into the dressing room during the last week and presented with a beautiful gold watch and handsome fountain pen by the performers and, to indicate the high regard in which Thornton was held, every artiste subscribed.

A number of performers and department heads signed contracts for 1926, but there would be many new faces when the 103rd

tour opened the next spring. A fast run was promised from Cordele to West Baden via the Southern Railway, and the show train was expected at the famous Indiana resort late Sunday night or early Monday morning.

OFFICIAL ROUTE CARD



1925

Date	Town	State	Railroad	Miles
NINTH WEEK				
" 15	Toledo	Ohio	LAS-Belt-NYC	100
" 16	Monroe	Mich.	NYC	25
" 17	Mt. Clements	"	NYC-GT	51
" 18	Flint	"	GT	100
" 19	Bay City	"	GT	79
" 20	Owosso	"	GT	63
TENTH WEEK				
June 22	Kalamazoo	Mich.	G. T.	119
" 23	Battle Creek	"	G. T.	30
" 24	Charlotte	"	G. T.	26
" 25	Ionia	"	G. T.-NYC	108
" 26	Allegan	"	N. Y. C.	68
" 27	Three Rivers	"	NYC-MC	50
ELEVENTH WEEK				
" 29	Gary	Ind.	MC	97
TOTAL MILEAGE TO DATE 4138				

The design used on the 1925 route card was utilized by the Robinson show for a number of years in the middle 1920s. Pfening Archives.

John Robinson, which had battled such rough weather earlier in the season in Pennsylvania, had been extremely lucky during its tour of the South. It came in just as the record heat wave was breaking, then made its swing through the Carolinas and got safely into Florida before the heavy rains began to fall in other parts of the South (Alabama, Mississippi, and western Tennessee). Sparks had about 21 days of rain in succession in Alabama and Mississippi. After battling cold and rain the 101 Ranch Wild West decided to call it a season in Birmingham, Alabama, and Hagenbeck-Wallace did the same thing in Memphis. Rains ruined the late cotton crop and any other crops which had not been harvested. The colored minstrel shows were hard hit in Mississippi. Huntington's show and Holtkamp's were both fighting the elements in that state, and over in Louisiana the Rabbit's Foot Company played in the rain for many a day. The *Billboard* summed up the 1925 season in the South as a bitter disappointment. Worst hit was poor Chester Monahan, who had dreamed bigger things and converted his 5-car Gollmar Bros. Circus to a 10-car, flat-car type show in September only to get caught in the rains a few weeks later. The wet stuff and mud quickly finished him and Mugivan promptly repossessed his equipment and sent it back to Peru, Indiana.

The *Billboard* also told of the departure of personnel of the John Robinson side-

show, which was said to have enjoyed a very successful season under the management of Duke Mills. Robinson manager Sam Dill permitted all of the sideshow personnel, as well as others, to ride the train back to West Baden if they wanted to.

In late November, as always, there were rumors about possible changes in the American Circus Corporation lineup of shows. One had it that John Robinson would be shelved in 1926 and the corporation would put out only two shows, one on 60 cars, the other on 30. The *Billboard* asked Jerry Mugivan about this and also the rumor that the ACC would put on the road for 1926 the Buffalo Bill Wild West and Pawnee Bill Fast East Shows with Major Gordon W. Lillie (Pawnee Bill) and Johnny Baker connected with it. Mugivan replied to the *Billboard*, "There is nothing to the rumor about changing the shows." He ignored the question about any wild west show going out.

Things were pretty quiet at West Baden for a number of weeks. It was announced that Bernie Griggs, a bareback rider with John Robinson, after playing an indoor show date in Jamestown, New York, would go to West Baden to break horses. He had already signed to be with John Robinson again in 1926.

The American Circus Corporation carried a large advertisement in the December 5, 1925, *Billboard* wanting to move various items of surplus property and animals. The ad was as follows:

"FOR SALE. Sleeping cars, private cars, flat cars, stock cars, circus tableau, cages, baggage wagons, box wagons, half box wagons, flat wagons, office wagons, electric light plants, animals, elephants, baggage horses, ring horses, ponies, harness, wardrobe, tents and show property of all kinds used in circus, wild west or carnival business.

- 8 sleeping cars
- 2 private cars
- 15 flat cars, all 60 ft. long
- 7 stock cars
- 4 baggage cars
- 9 box wagons
- 5 half box wagons
- 5 flat wagons
- 2 office wagons
- 15 Shetland ponies
- 6 Male elephants
- 1 Female elephant
- 5 Male lions working in groups as one act
- 6 Tigers, working in group as one act
- 4 Lionesses, working in group as one act
- 5 Polar bears, working in group as one act
- 4 leopards and pumas, working in group as one act
- 6 black bears
- (Have props, arena and all paraphernalia for above acts)
- 1 Minstrel show, complete of stage, seats, and scenery
- 1 Hawaiian show of stage, seats and scenery.

Have a TEN CAR SHOW complete ready





for the road. If you are in the Circus, Wild West or Carnival business and need property of any kind write us. Address  
American Circus Corporation  
Peru, Indiana"

Some of the above equipment had been with the T.A. Wolfe Shows, carnival, and later the circus playing week-long fraternal dates which was out for several weeks in the spring of 1925 (also using the T.A. Wolfe title). The complete ready-for-the-road 10-car circus was Chester Monahan's Gollmar Bros. Circus, which toured only a few weeks in the fall of 1925 before getting caught in the rains of Kentucky and western Tennessee and going broke.

Fletcher Smith reviewed the Circus Season of 1925 in the December 12, 1925, *Billboard*. He noted that perhaps weather was the biggest factor resulting in who made it and who didn't during the year. Rains hurt many shows, some in the East early in the season, but not as much as did the torrents which flooded the South in the fall. By contrast, Christy Bros. went for five weeks in an area suffering its worst drought in years and it hurt at the ticket wagon. Smith noted there was stiff competition and a gang up of shows particularly in the East and very few shows were free of opposition during the season. Several of the smaller overland shows had very good years, including M.L. Clark and Rose Killian, both of which planned to stay out all winter in the deep South. The Mighty Haag Show also did well. Owner Ernest

John Robinson's Circus setting up on a new lot in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, May 4-5, 1925. Gordon M. Potter Collection in the Pfening Archives.

Haag planned to continue touring Florida but would close sometime in January to clean up and paint before hitting the road again.

The December 26, 1925, *Billboard* gave the final news of the year and a key story said that Capt. Richard Ricardo, well-known wild animal trainer, after about a half-century in show business, had finally decided to retire. He had been with John Robinson during the past season and the article noted he had gone to that show when Ringling-Barnum sold certain animal acts to the American Circus Corporation. Ricardo gave as his reason for retiring the fact that "there isn't any money in animal training any more."

It may be recalled that 1924 was the final season for caged wild animal acts on Ringling-Barnum. This type act had its peak years on circuses in the early '20s. Gradually most shows starting cutting down on them in the mid-to-late '20s, including John Robinson, and by 1929 that show's performance would be completely void of caged acts.

And so 1925 faded into history. The new season would see many changes in the

Big top on the John Robinson lot, season of 1925. Pfening Archives.



American Circus Corporation's units. All three of their shows were in the same quarters they occupied the previous winter, John Robinson in West Baden, and Sells-Floto and Hagenbeck-Wallace in Peru. All three managers were retained and they had the responsibility of getting their circuses ready for the next season, but there would be some changes, and these will be covered in the next article.

The author wishes to thank Chang Reynolds and Don Francis for their help in the preparation of this article and the Pfening Archives for use of several illustrations.

## SEASON'S REVIEW HELP NEEDED

It is not too early to plan your contribution to the 1985 season review which will be published in the January-February 1986 *Bandwagon*. When you visit a circus this summer take time to make notes on the tent sizes, number of trucks and an animal list. Your help is needed in providing these details. Photographs are very important. Please take photos that show the title if possible.

We are most anxious to have photos and information on Roberts Bros., Reid Bros., Bentley Bros., Friendly Bros., Pickle Family, Swan Bros., Happytime, Herriott Family, Vargas, Borger/Berlin Bros., Circus USA, Europorama, Roller Bros., Oscarian Bros., Circus Europa, Allan Bros. and Culpepper & Merriweather.

Send your material to the *Bandwagon* Editor.

## CONVENTION REPORT

Full coverage of the 1985 CHS convention in Pittsfield, Massachusetts will appear in the September-October issue. Space restrictions preclude its appearance in this issue.

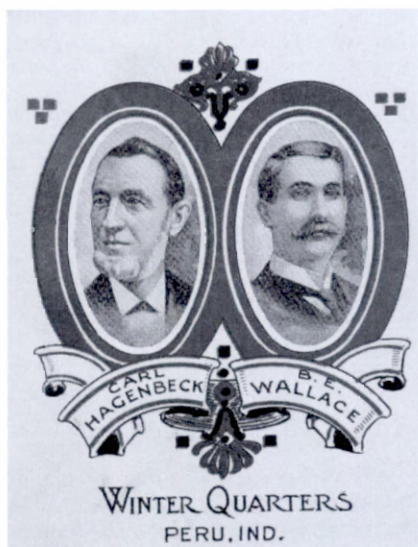
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# The Carl Hagenbeck and Great Wallace Shows

COMBINED CIRCUS, MENAGERIE AND  
TRAINED WILD ANIMAL EXHIBITIONS

*The Donaldson Litho Co. Newport, Ky.*

## THE CARL HAGENBECK AND GREAT WALLACE CIRCUS

SEASON OF 1913

by Gordon M. Carver

Benjamin E. Wallace, at age 65, was in the waning years of his career as a circus owner when he took his show on the road in the spring of 1913. His first circus, Wallace & Co.'s Grand Menagerie, International Circus, Museum, Alliance of Novelties and Mardi-Gras Holiday Hidalgo, toured in 1884. The show started out with 183 horses and mules, 35 wagons and cages and moved on 15 railroad cars. Much of the equipment came from the W.C. Coup Circus, and the Nathan and Co. shows. James Anderson, formerly associated with the Sells Brothers, was his partner in the venture. By 1890 the show was using a 120-foot big top and two 60-foot middles; a 70-foot menagerie top with four 30-foot middles and a 60-foot side show tent with three 30's. The show moved 24 cars including two advance cars.

During these early years the Wallace show was a grift outfit and often burned up the territory it played. The heat from the grift became so great in 1891 James Anderson could no longer remain, and he sold his interest to Wallace. The title was changed to Cook & Whitby's European Circus, Museum and Menagerie for the 1892, 1893, and 1894 seasons. For the 1893 season Wallace added two stocks, three flats, and a coach, making it a 30-car show. From 1895 until 1906 it was titled the Great Wallace Show. In 1899 Wallace purchased the LaPearl circus and thereby came in possession of a large hippo, as well as five more elephants.

On January 9, 1907, Wallace formed a partnership with John H. Havlin, Frank R.

Tate, John O. Talbott and Jeremiah J. Mugivan to purchase the Carl Hagenbeck Trained Wild Animal Show. Actually Tate and Havlin, two of the original owners of the Hagenbeck show, assigned the Hagenbeck show to the new partnership, receiving one-half interest. The agreement called

The Donaldson Litho firm produced many posters for the Hagenbeck-Wallace 1913 season. This one was also reproduced in the center of the 1913 courier booklet. Dunn-Tibbals Collection.

The Donaldson Litho Company designed this letterhead used by Hagenbeck-Wallace in 1913. The title is in gold outlined in red, and the drawings of Hagenbeck and Wallace are in black. The letter was written on December 27, 1913, and signed by C.E. Cory, the manager.

for Wallace to have exclusive management and control of the combined show. Meanwhile Tate and Havlin had to face the financial obligations for which they were personally liable, in connection with losses





suffered by the Hagenbeck show. This was solved by a loan of \$30,000 from Wallace and one for \$15,000 from Mugivan to Tate and Havlin. The loans were secured by the pledging and assigning of Tate and Havlin's interest. The partnership toured the Carl Hagenbeck and Great Wallace Circus during the 1907 season. By the end of the season Tate and Havlin defaulted on their loans and Wallace and Mugivan owned the outfit, having spent only \$45,000. Wallace then purchased Mugivan's interest and became sole owner. Using the best equipment from both shows, Wallace continued each season using the combined title.

The season of 1912 had been a good one for the big Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus. Using a six-pole big top with three rings and two stages and a large and varied menagerie, including 15 performing elephants, it was not far behind the two big shows on the road—Ringling Bros. World's Greatest Shows, and Barnum & Bailey Greatest Show on Earth. The performance featured three wild animal acts in the center ring arena, starring Louis Roth with a large mixed group that included male and female lions, male and female tigers, pumas, leopards, polar bears and German bear hounds. Also appearing in the show were the Nelson family of acrobats, three bareback riding groups headed by the McCree-Davenport troupe and the Lukens flying trapeze act. It was an outstanding performance and set high standards for the coming season of 1913.

Plans were well underway for another fine season for the "Highest Class Show in the World" when disaster struck at the end of March. The year 1913 is remembered in Indiana as the year of the great March flood. Ben Wallace suffered serious financial losses in it, as did hundreds of other Hoosiers. On March 25, 1913, the Mississippi River rose so quickly and unexpectedly in the most deadly rampage of its history that the men at winterquarters could do little. Most of the baggage horses were on high ground across the river on the Springdale Farm. The elephants were turned loose in hopes they could save themselves, but eight of them perished. Two or three were washed downstream into Peru. Twenty-one lions and tigers and eight performing horses drowned, and much damage was done to the circus property.

An April issue of the *Billboard* carried a spread of seven photographs taken of Peru and the winterquarters during and just after the flood. It was noted that the water had risen six feet on the circus property and remained for 40 hours. Ben Wallace's home was pictured, and the cutline stated that the beautiful home had been injured by the high water. One dead elephant was shown lying between wagons; another was pictured on the ground at the kitchen door of the Wallace house at the quarters. A third elephant died while trying to break through a fence at the rear of the home. Another photo showed the downtown Peru circus train sheds completely under water.

Canvas, seats and lighting apparatus being made in Chicago had not yet been sent



This elephant drowned in the wagon yard during the 1913 flood of the Peru winter quarters.

to Peru. All plans had been completed to open the season on April 12 at the Coliseum in St. Louis. It was obvious that the St. Louis date would have to be cancelled. A telegram was sent to the advance car managers, who were already in St. Louis, about to begin billing the city, to stop all activity. The show would require time to reprepare for the 1913 season.

The Peru telegraph wires went dead and it was several days before the thousands of friends throughout the world could allay their suspense with any reliable news regarding possible loss of life, and of actual conditions. The route book published by the show that year made the following reference to the flood: "Those at the farm were enduring deprivations and inconveniences and labor such as they never want

Frank H. Krieg, a Peru photographer, traveled to Marion, Indiana, on April 26, 1913, to take this shot of a crowded midway. All illustrations are from the Pfening Archives unless otherwise noted.



to endure again. The men were caught in the barns where they remained forty hours without food and the women were on the second floors of the several residences. Wild animals were howling and moaning, horses were frightened, every living thing, both human and beast, seemed to realize that something terrible was transpiring. Of the many sad incidents of the flood, perhaps the death of eight fine, highly educated Hagenbeck elephants was the most pathetic. The huge monsters roamed here and there forgetful of their size and impressed with their helplessness and surrounded the house, begging those within to come out and save them. They died from exposure and cold, most of them within a radius of 100 feet of the house. While most everyone attempted to do something to afford relief to man and beast, it was Emil Schwyer, the celebrated animal trainer, who saved several wild beasts by swimming with them to high ground, carrying one at a time on his back, but the waters were too quick for him and some of the animals too impatient, and he could not save all.

"The Showman's League was the first from the outside to send assistance, and



the special train from Chicago brought welcome relief to hundreds. Aside from the loss and damage to the circus property, which was a great deal less than first anticipated, Mr. Wallace lost a small fortune in damage done to his farm and city property. One of the chief characteristics of Mr. Wallace is his reticence to talk regarding his own financial affairs; he never told outsiders just how many thousands of dollars he did lose."

Ben Wallace and his staff moved quickly in getting the show ready for a new opening date of April 24 in Peru. He had several elephants and other animals shipped in from other circuses and from the Hagenbeck Zoo in Hamburg, Germany. While the loss to the show was rather large, the damage to equipment was relatively slight. Wagons and seats were undamaged except for receiving a heavy bath of muddy water which required a thorough hosing down. All canvas and costumes at the quarters were luckily stored in the second floor of the barns and were untouched. The stock cars and coaches, stored at the downtown train sheds, were submerged to within a couple of feet of their roofs and the flats were totally covered. The removal of mud from the rail equipment was the primary problem.

Fortunately there was no loss of life but a large number of animals confined to cages or tethered and unable to free themselves were lost. Emil Schwyer saved eight of his charges by carrying them on his back; however, three tigers, three lions, two leopards, a nyghau (a rare African antelope), a sacred ox, an ibex, and a gnu were lost.

While the equipment loss was minimal, the loss of animals affected the show seriously. Since most of the animals lost were performers, the usual heavy emphasis on animal acts in the show was markedly reduced for 1913. As will be seen in the program listing, there were no wild animal acts and the elephant act was reduced to a one-ring display. Although the printed program listed 15 elephants appearing in three rings, various elephant inventories show only 12 elephants on the show in both 1912 and 1916. There were other changes in the program, too, that may or may not have been caused by the flood. Those differences are seen in the program as planned, and the one actually presented, since we are fortunate to have both.

Because of the flood and the disruption of the show's plans for the coming season, it was not possible to make the opening indoor stand in the St. Louis Coliseum on Saturday, April 12. Plans originally called for the show to stay in St. Louis through April 19 and move east into Illinois. Instead the St. Louis stand and the following week's dates in Illinois were cancelled and it opened under canvas in its home town of Peru, Indiana, Thursday and Friday April 24 and 25, followed by Marion. These two towns were really rehearsal spots and the show was not reviewed in any publications until the following Monday, in Newark, Ohio, following a 191-mile run.

Both the *Billboard* and the *New York*



This view of a side show opening was taken during the 1913 season. The snake charmer is on the bally platform.

*Clipper* had extensive reviews of the show but the performance listings of the show differed substantially. It is apparent that the *Clipper* merely reported the program which the show had planned for the St. Louis opening prior to the flood, while the *Billboard* gave the program as it had been altered by the animal losses from the flood. As a matter of interest both programs will be reported here so that the extent to which the show was affected will be seen.

The program as reported in the *Clipper* and as shown in the printed program was as follows except that it should be noted that originally there were to be three wild animal acts; a mixed group, polar bears and lions, none of which were in the show although the mixed group is listed here.

Following the opening walkaround came the first display.

- 1—Trained zebras worked by Joseph Litcheff; Floyds leaping wolf hounds;

The second display of the 1913 performance was statue acts featuring Ernst Brengk in gold in the center ring. The large big top used six center poles, and contained three rings and two stages.



trained lions, tigers, leopards and pumas presented by Emil Schwyer [this did not actually appear]; Liberty horse and dog trained by Mlle. Bedini.

- 2—A beautiful statuary number artistically presented by Riegher Bros and Ardell in greek poses; Woodford's statue dogs; Brengk's Models; the Brissons in poses plastique.
- 3—Remarkable aerial exhibitions by the Six Van Diemens; the Fredricks in aerial teeth suspensions.
- 4—Fifteen performing elephants in three rings, exhibited by John Worden, J. Healy and George Berthm. The animals play musical instruments, balance on teeterboards, walk on rolling barrels, play ten pins and do other acrobatic acts.
- 5—Trained seals displayed by Captain Nelson and Captain Webb.
- 6—Roland and Adriel high perch artists; a melange of double and single aerial acts by Patt & Patt, Cecilia Fortuna, LaQuinlyn Sisters and Mlle. Anita; Freehand Bros. hazardous feats on the high perch.
- 7—Comedy acrobatics by Prickett, Luster and Nemo; Rice, Bell and Baldwin; the Four Comrades; Kennard & Devoe.
- 8—Finks comedy unrideable mule Pete;



Kerslake's trained pigs; Lilkens dog actors; ponies and dogs by Victor Bedini.

- 9—Double equestrienne act with Miss Minnie Hodgini and Miss Olga Reed; Queen's Jesters; Clowns in a political mixup; Equestrianism of grace and agility by Miss Lulu Davenport and Miss Nettie Greer
- 10—Carleson on the slack wire; Cevene troupe on a double tight wire; Nettie Carroll trio tight wire; Leach-LaQuinlyn trio wire act
- 11—Baboon bicycle act trained by Mons. DeMarce; riding monkeys from France trained by Mons. Felix
- 12—Two of the greatest riding troupes—The Riding Conners and the Great McCree-Davenport Troupe.
- 13—Expert contortionists—Harry DeVoe frog man; Mlle. Nadje the flexible venus; Miss Ida Delno physical cultress; Jules and Carlos Spanish froggerine and dragonolorum.
- 14—An exhibition of superb high school equestrianism by the Misses Carroll and Miaco; the Misses Conners and Reed; Victor and Madame Bedini; by Miss Kantor; and Miss Coyle and George Conners.
- 15—The greatest acrobatic display of the century by the Hassan Ben Ali troupe of nine whirlwinds of the desert; Cornalla troupe the best acrobatic family; the Seven Tasmanians, lady acrobats from down under.
- 16—Flying trapeze number by two outstanding groups—the Four Aleximes from Holland; The Giuran-Fischer troupe from Hungary.
- 17—A crazy number participated in by the full staff of the big show's clowns (including Billy Hart and Arthur Borella).
- 18—Real Wild West, an exhibition of rough riding and bronco busting led by Bronco Bob.
- 19—Seven racing events culminating in three two horse roman standing teams ridden by Marie Ellsee, Harry Thomas and E. Buck.

On Monday, April 28, as previously stated, the show played Newark, Ohio, and it was here that the show was reviewed by



Donaldson printed this 16-page courier for the 1913 season. It contained eight pages in full color.

the *Billboard*, for it was here that Ben Wallace, still the owner of the show, considered the show to really open its season. It was not an auspicious day for such an opener, however, as it rained hard and the show had a very muddy lot. Because of the weather the parade was not given.

The *Billboard* review was a very complete one with much comment about the individual acts. The Nettie Carroll trio, it was observed, had improved their wire act over what it had been in 1912 when on the Barnum & Bailey show. Similarly, the Leach-LaQuinlyn trio, also fresh from the previous year on the Barnum & Bailey show, was singled out for praise. Then there was Fred Egner, producing clown, "big, solid, jocular Fred, than whom we know no better, and Joe Moore, another Joey whose baseball burlesque is a

Bert Cole, big show announcer, in white suit, introduces Al J. Massey and his 24-piece band for a preshow center ring concert.

scream." Another comment on the clowns spoke of the burlesque of the Suffragettes (women had not yet received the vote, we must remember), called "Suffering Yets," was most funny. Another new clown number that received much laughter was the "Automatic Hair Cutter."

Other acts receiving special mention were the boxing kangaroos, the riding Conners, Madame Bedini and Rose McCree. While it was not usual for circus audiences to applaud acts under the big top, they did do that for the trained seals (really sea lions) when at the finish one of the seals played the National Anthem. Finally three other acts singled out for praise were Patt & Patt on the double trapeze, the Four Aleximes aerialists and the bicycle-riding baboon trained by Mons. DeMarce.

Following the opening walkaround on the hippodrome track of human and animal performers led by Al J. Massey and his band of 25 instrumentalists, the show started:

- 2—Cornelias Acrobatic troupe; Woodford's statue dogs; Brengk and Ardell statues; Riegler Bros greek poses; Brissons plastique poses.
- 3—The Suttons; Fredericks aerial teeth; Cevenes double wire.
- 4—Madame Bedini liberty horse and dog; six trained elephants; Joseph Kitchel trained zebras.
- 5—Trained seals (sea lions) in two rings and on two stages
- 6—Pritchett, Lester and Nemo comiques; Rice, Bell and Baldwin "Humpty Dumpty;" Comedy acrobats; Giuran-Fischer troupe bars; Four comrades burlesque acrobatics.
- 7—Lesch-LaQuinlyn Trio casting acrobatics; Cecile Fortunata aerialist; aerial act; Mrs. Fisher aerialist.
- 8—Olga Reed equestrienne; clowns; Lulu Davenport and Nettie Greer bareback riding; clowns; Minnie Hodgini equestrienne.
- 9—Nettie Carroll trio wire artists; Cevene troupe, double wires; wire act; Lesch trio wire act; Arensen.
- 10—Conners dogs; DeMarces trained monkeys and riding baboon; Fink's mules; DeMarces monkeys; Bedini's high school horses.
- 11—Ida Delno physical culturist and Harry DeMarr contortion; Mlle. Nadje contortion and Patt & Patt aerialists; contortion act and Riegler Bros poses; Brissons and two Ardells poses; Lester and Prickett.
- 12—Riding Conners; clowns; Reno McCree riding numbers; clowns; Joe Litchell riding troupe.
- 13—Roland and Adriel high perch artists; Cornelia troupe acrobats; Suttons; Carl Hatchette troupe.
- 14—Hardig-Scott; Lil Kerslake pigs; Lilkens hogs; Kerslake's pigs; Arensen's trick dogs.
- 15—Three rings of menage acts featuring Victor and Madame Bedini.
- 16—Freehand Bros. high perch artists; La-Joe troupe; Bicycle act; Cornelia troupe; Roland and Adriel aerialists.







17—Joe Litchell; clowns; Crazy number; clowns; Joe Coyle.

18—Aleximes flying trapeze; Giuran-Fischer flying trapeze.

19—Races, seven events—double big horse tandem; Ladies jockey; Gents jockey; Clowns mule sulkies; five pony tandem; Children's steeplechase; two horse Roman standing with three teams.

Leaving Newark the show moved rapidly east through Coshocton, Canton, Akron, Youngstown and New Castle. The next week, starting Monday May 5, they were in Wheeling, West Virginia; Washington, Pennsylvania; Uniontown, Fairmont, Connelville and Greensburg. This was followed by Johnstown, May 12, Altoona, Huntington, Lewistown, Carlisle, and Chambersburg. Then on May 19 they were in Harrisburg, after which came Lancaster, Coatsville, Wilmington, Delaware; Camden, New Jersey; and Bridgeton.

Now came the longest stand of the season, a one-week six-day stay in Philadelphia. It was a satisfactory stand but not an outstanding one. While the crowds were good they were not as large as had been hoped for, although this should not have been surprising since both the Buffalo Bill Wild West Show and Ringling Bros.

**Menagerie superintendent Emil Schwyer presented this four-elephant group in the center ring of the big show.**

World's Greatest Shows had preceded them into the city of brotherly love. Their business was better than the Bill Show and equal to the Ringlings, but none of the three had any turnaway shows. However, in one way Hagenbeck-Wallace was very successful in that the newspapers gave them outstanding coverage, more than they gave to the other shows, praising the performance unstintingly.

The show then moved north into New Jersey, playing Trenton and New Brunswick followed by a two-day stand in Newark, Wednesday and Thursday, June 4-5. This was the first two-day stand of the season, and in fact it was one of only five stands of more than one day, the others besides Philadelphia being Buffalo, Detroit, Cleveland and New Orleans (near the end of the tour). Again the show followed the Buffalo Bill and Ringling shows into town. In spite of this competition, the *Newark*

**The Leach-LaQuinlyn Trio presented a novel casting act on stage one. The star back seats can be seen next to the back door.**



*Daily News*, the leading paper, had only two small ads for the show, one a 2½-inch column and the other a ½-inch column, although the *Sunday Call* had a much larger ad. With so little newspaper coverage it must be assumed that there was a liberal covering of the billboards, buildings and windows with advertising of the show's coming. After leaving Newark they moved into Pennsylvania at Easton and Allentown.

They spent two weeks in that state visiting most of the larger towns and cities in the eastern part of the state before moving into New York. While business for the month of June was spotty, the good days outnumbered the poor ones. The one problem in Pennsylvania was the hills in the towns. It was hard on the horses and several persons on the show commented that in the future some of the hilliest should be skipped. In Shamokin, Friday the 13th, that unlucky day, the show was attacked by a group of hoodlums from a hill that adjoined the lot. The police would do nothing to stop the problem so eventually the show took a gang of canvassmen and dislodged them, receiving much applause from the respectable townsfolk who had been aggrieved by the hoodlums. Other Pennsylvania towns played through June 19 prior to moving into New York were Reading, Norristown, Lebanon, Pottsville, Milton, Williamsport, Bloomsburg, Wilkes-Barre and Scranton.

On Friday June 20 the show arrived in New York state at Binghamton, where it stayed for 19 playing dates. Other towns shown were Elmira, Utica, Oswego, Watertown, Rome, Gloversville, Amsterdam, Peekskill, Poughkeepsie, Troy, Albany, Hudson, Schenectady, Syracuse, Newark, Lockport and ending with two days in Buffalo, Thursday and Friday July 10-11.

It was during the stay in New York that the big event of the year took place, even bigger in many ways than the flood. It was on July 1 in Poughkeepsie that Ben Wallace signed away ownership of his show of thirty years. A syndicate was organized as the Carl Hagenbeck and Great Wallace Show Co., an Indiana corporation with headquarters in Indianapolis. Officers of the new company were John O. Talbot, president; Edward M. Ballard, vice president; Charles E. Cory, secretary-treasurer. Additional directors were Hugh Harrison, Charles Hagaman and J.B. Warren. Edward M. Ballard, of West Baden, Indiana, was the power and the money behind the purchase from Wallace.

Wallace retained ownership of the Peru winterquarters and train sheds. Other circus property not being used by the circus during the 1913 season was also not included in the deal. He remained active, buying and selling circus equipment, much as was done by William P. Hall in Lancaster, Missouri. The circus returned to the Peru quarters at the end of the 1913 season under a rental agreement negotiated by C.E. Cory, general manager of the show and also a nephew of Wallace. After the opening of the 1914 season the Hagenbeck-Wallace



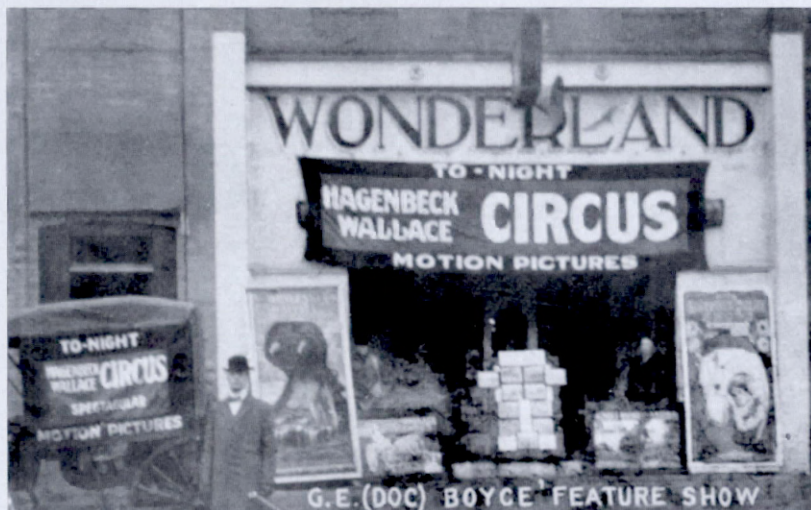
## THE HAGENBECK-WALLACE CIRCUS NUMBER TWO UNIT

One of the more unusual agreements ever made by a circus took place when a four-reel motion picture was made of the Carl Hagenbeck-Great Wallace Shows. Big C Features of Chicago made the deal with Ben Wallace in 1912. The film covered the entire circus performance, the unloading, the trains, the erecting of the tents and the dining department.

Big C Features ran a large advertisement in the November 16, 1912, issue of *The New York Clipper*. It stated, incorrectly as it turns out, that it was the first time ever a circus was in the movies. It further mentioned that "this picture has 35 designs of paper, heralds and 27 different photographs. Bill it like a circus and get the money. 33,000 paid admissions at Butterfly Theatre, Milwaukee, in seven days—a \$100,000 house." The road shows were broken down into 15 units, covering all 48 states. The ad stated that "No one has the right to book, sign or arrange for contracts unless they have the original authorized contracts signed by us."

Although the rights to show the film were sold for a number of states, only one man is remembered as being successful in putting the film over and making money. G.E. "Doc" Boyce, of Waterloo, Iowa, had a ventriloquist act

Boyce points to the disclaimer on a Hagenbeck-Wallace lithograph. The small notice pasted on the bill states "motion picture, four reels."



G.E. "Doc" Boyce in front of a theatre showing his Hagenbeck-Wallace motion picture.

in vaudeville when he purchased the rights to the film for Iowa and Nebraska. During the seasons of 1912-13-14 he exhibited the film in 593 different motion picture theatres in Iowa. Boyce took full advantage of the privilege of buying all of the circus lithographs and heralds he needed. He used the same full-color posters that were used by the regular circus advance billing crew. Using this material, it appeared that the real, as opposed to the reel, circus was coming to town. He did paste a small disclaimer on each poster stating, "Motion Picture, four reels." Boyce wrote to theatre owners on full-color letterheads of the same design used by the circus. The title was listed as "Original Hagenbeck-Wallace Spectacular Motion Picture." He played on a percentage of 50 per cent with 10 and 20 cent prices.

One of the promotional pieces sent out by Boyce to Iowa theatre owners listed 26 theatres that broke house records with the film. Listed were theatres in such burghs as Cresco, Paullina, Wall Lake, Deep River, Sigourney, Mediapo-

lis, Keota, and Correctionville. Theatre names included such lulus as Cozy, Scenic, Foto Pla, Magic, Rex and Dreamland.

In a series of letters written in 1944 to the late Charlie Campbell, Boyce told about his success with the film during the three years. He did not say what had happened to the actual film, but at the time he still had a number of short pieces of film, some 10 to 30 feet in length. Boyce mentioned that he was enclosing a sample of film that showed Ben Wallace, R.M. Harvey and Charles Cory standing in front of the marquee on the midway. At the time he also still had a four-sheet litho of tigers and a three-sheet of "Big George" the hippo, both mounted on cloth with brass grommets for hanging. He mentioned in one letter that he had sold most of what he had to collectors in 1942. In spite of the number of prints of the Hagenbeck-Wallace Spectacular film that were in circulation during the middle 1910s none found their way into the hands of circus historians or collectors. It must be assumed that all prints have been lost or destroyed, unless by chance a print may be filed away in the Eastman Film Collection or the Library of Congress. Printed materials used by Boyce have survived. One Hagenbeck-Wallace poster printed by Donaldson, with the Boyce disclaimer pasted on it, is in the Pfening Archives, along with other printed material he used.

It is interesting to note that the Hagenbeck-Wallace show played 22 dates in Iowa in 1912 and 17 in 1914. The show did not play that state during the 1913 season. -Fred D. Pfening, Jr.







circus would not return to Peru until the end of the 1924 season.

During the winter of 1915-1916 there were no shows at the Wallace quarters. In March of 1916 Mugivan and Bowers purchased from John G. Robinson the title and physical equipment of the John Robinson Ten Big shows which had been off the road since the 1911 season with most of the properties being stored at the old Robinson quarters in Terrace Park, Ohio. The new owners immediately transferred the title itself to their Robinson's Famous Shows and sold the old John Robinson equipment to B.E. Wallace, who had it shipped to Peru. For several years thereafter Wallace leased some of the equipment or sold it outright to other circuses and carnivals. Wallace was reported to have had an interest in some carnivals during this period, but his interest may have only been in the form of leased equipment. The Peru quarters remained empty during the winter of 1916-1917. Following the end of the 1917 season Mugivan and Bowers rented the Wallace Peru quarters and sent the John Robinson show there for the winter of 1917-1918. The Robinson show continued to winter in Peru through the 1923 season. During the

**Wagon-mounted pit show displaying a large snake. First planned as a downtown attraction, it was later moved to the mid-way in 1913.**

early spring of 1920 Mugivan and Bowers framed the Howes Great London Circus and Peru saw two shows leave their midst that season. But at the end of the 1920 season only the Robinson show returned to Peru and the Wallace quarters. Wallace had vowed that he would never sell his Peru real estate holdings as long as he lived. Wallace died on April 8, 1921. On October 27, 1921, Mugivan, Bowers and Ballard purchased the winter quarters, about 600 acres of land and the railroad car shops at North Peru, from the Wallace heirs for about \$500,000. The sale included all of the miscellaneous circus property on both pieces of real estate.

Following the sale of the Hagenbeck-Wallace show by Wallace, Charles E. Cory was named general manager and J.O. Tal-

**The interior of the five-pole menagerie top as viewed from the entrance. The tent was not filled with cages, the result of animals lost in the spring flood.**



bot was appointed assistant manager. To run the show there were some 33 managers and department heads and miscellaneous persons. Besides the names already mentioned there are some who were well known in more recent times. R.M. Harvey was the Advance Manager with Floyd King as General Press Agent, with two advance cars and an opposition brigade, all handled by 56 men, and two 24-hour men, one of whom was Al Hoffman. J.E. Ogden was manager of the side show with P.G. Lowery heading the band and Dixieland Minstrels with a cast of 17. The side show consisted of some 11 or 12 platform attractions. Other supplementary income for the show, besides that derived from the side show, came from various refreshment stands and candy butchers using 15 men and a group of 23 called "special privileges" about which we can only guess—were they operators of games of chance and short change men? In addition to the foregoing and the performers there were nine working departments. The largest of these were canvas with 68 men, baggage stock with 52 and the cookhouse with 46. James Davis, starting a long line of Davises in the circus-feeding business, was head of the latter. Other departments were

**Newspaper ad used for the Oswego, New York, date. The top illustration is from a special lithograph.**

OH JOY! OH GLADNESS!  
**CIRCUS**  
 COMING TO TOWN  
2:00 AND 8:00 P. M., RAIN OR SHINE

OSWEGO  
**TUESDAY,  
 JUNE 24**

---

THE CARL  
**HAGENBECK**  
 GREAT WALLACE  
**SHOWS**  
 COMBINED

---

Only Circus This Season, Then Good By Till Next Year  
 WORLD'S GREATEST CIRCUS ORGANIZATION

<b>3 Rings</b> Colossal Steel-Girted Arena. Royal Roman Hippodrome <b>3—GREAT HERDS OF PERFORMING ELEPHANTS—3</b>	<b>2 Stages</b> <b>48 CHAMPION EQUESTRIANS</b> , the greatest bareback riders the world has ever seen, including <b>4 CONNERS</b> .
<b>M'll Nadje</b> "The Most Perfect" woman in all the world. She's a Circus Venus.	<b>6 Van Diemens</b> Human Birds without mechanical assistance, Champions of all champions.
1,000—PEOPLE—1,000 400—HORSES—400 400 PERFORMERS—400	3—R. R. TRAINS—3 14—ACRES OF TENTS—14 10,000—SEATS—10,000
<b>Fifty Clowns</b> WITH MANY NEW AND up-to-date pantomime novelties	<b>Tasmanian Sisters</b> Pretty, bewitching debutante acrobats in evening costume

**HAGENBECK'S** Most wonderful trained wild animals. A Zoological Paradise.

---

GRAND FREE STREET PARADE AT 10 A. M.  
 Reserved Chairs and Admission Tickets on Sale on Show Day at Butler's Pharmacy  
 At Exactly the Same Prices charged on the Show Grounds



properties with 36 men, train crew with 31, ring stock with 22, menagerie with 15, side show canvas with 14, and lights, still gas, with only 6. The total staff on the show including performers but excluding the advance totaled about 625.

After leaving New York the show started moving west, playing Erie, Pennsylvania, Saturday July 12. Here a sudden 40-mile-per-hour gale just before the matinee ripped the big top very badly, so that both afternoon and evening shows had to be given under the sky. Then came four days in Ohio at Cleveland, Sandusky and Toledo. Fortunately the Sunday off in Cleveland gave the show time to repair the big top. The next ten dates were in Michigan at Jackson, Ann Arbor, Detroit, Port Huron, Lapeer, Bay City, Owosso, Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo with July being closed out in Indiana at Elkhart and Kendallville. The week of July 21 starting in Detroit gave the show its biggest business in its history with the following week very close behind.

The next three and a half weeks from August 1 through 25 were also spent in Indiana, except for one interlude, Friday 8 at Dayton, Ohio. Dayton had originally been scheduled for April 25 but when the route was rearranged because of the flood that date was omitted. Since Dayton had also had flood damage at the same time it was an agreeable surprise to have the city give the show a one-day's record business to date. Then almost without exception the towns in Indiana also gave the show immense business. The August Indiana towns, starting Friday 1 at Auburn, were Columbia City, Frankfort, Kokomo, Bluffton, New Castle and Richmond. It is interesting that this show, which could seat about 8,000 in its six-pole big top, could play, successfully, some of these towns, which were quite small. Next came Elwood, Noblesville, Hartford City, Muncie, Rushville and Anderson. The last seven days in Indiana were filled by Indianapolis, Brazil, Greencastle, Bloomington, Bedford, Washington and Vincennes. In Bloomington the big top was leveled for the second time, after the matinee, as a result of which the evening show was cancelled. The last five days of August starting Tuesday 26 took the show into Illinois at Olney, Mattoon, Decatur, Springfield and Litchfield. At Litchfield it was announced that three elephants had been purchased and would soon be added to the show starting a rebuilding of the herd.

After five more dates in Illinois starting Monday September 1 at Paris and continuing in Robinson, Carmi, Harrisburg and Cairo, they started a fast move south which within two weeks was to get them into Texas. Saturday 6 had them in Fulton, Kentucky, followed by Monday in Memphis. They were the "first in" in Memphis and followed by Gentry Bros on the 15th, Barnum & Bailey on the 22nd and Sells-Floto on October 6. Also in Memphis a large 28-foot-long snake was received from Ruhe of New York. It had originally been planned to put it on display in the "up town wagon." However, these plans were



This clown bill was printed by Donaldson for the 1913 season of the Hagenbeck-Wallace show.

changed and it was used as a pit show on the midway. Next the show crossed the Mississippi River into Arkansas, where they were billed at Brinkley, Little Rock, Arkadelphia, Nashville and Texarkana before entering Texas for a rainy and muddy stay. At Texarkana they could not unload as the lot was under water.

The first week in Texas starting Monday September 15 was spent in Clarksville, where only the cookhouse was unloaded. The train then moved on to Paris, where only a matinee was given. Next came Greenville, where the streets were so muddy they could not get the wagons to the lot. Greenville was followed by Waxahachie, Temple and Brenham. In all of these stops the mud was the deepest and thickest kind, causing the show all kinds of trouble. Then for three days, September 22-24, the sun

The interior of the six-pole big top showing eight high reserved chairs. The top had five 50-foot middle pieces.



shone and everything including business was fine in Galveston, Houston and Beaumont. However, the good weather was not to last.

In Houston the good business was something of a surprise for there was heavy advertising by the Ringling show, which was to be there one week later on September 30. And the newspapers were filled with articles as well as paid ads about the big one, much more so than about the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus. However, there were some interesting "facts" in the newspapers about Hagenbeck-Wallace that we can quote for a comparison of what we believe to be the truth.

According to reports in the trade papers, the show was traveling on 40 cars, not including the advance, in two sections but the Houston papers stated that it was moving on three trains. There was, they stated, a "flying squadron" which carried "stake and chain wagons, tent wagons, baggage wagons, and the great culinary department better known as the cookhouse." There were also "several cars of draft horses and four sleeping cars for the workmen. The second and third sections



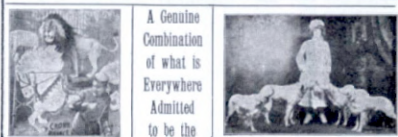
travel thirty minutes apart. The second section is made up almost entirely of Carl Hagenbeck's wild animals together with parade and tableaux wagons. The third section is composed of twenty-six Pullman sleepers," which carried performers and management. Obviously there were not 26 coaches in the third section; perhaps there were 10. While we know that there were 2 cars on the advance and about 40 cars back, we do not know what they were. However, a guess would be about 20 flats and possibly 8 or 9 stocks with the remaining 13 or 14 being coaches. With this split it is possible that the three sections that came to Houston would have consisted of 11 flats, 3 stocks and 2 coaches in the first section, 9 flats and 5 stocks in the second section and 12 coaches in the third section.

The parade route was also given in the Houston papers. The lot was virtually in the center of the city. It was only two blocks from the present site of the main downtown library. It is interesting that the parade route was only about two miles long and moved away from the center of the city rather than through it. It went north about ten blocks, east two blocks, then straight back south again and west to the lot.

It was reported regularly in all stories about the show that the big top had seats for 10,000. This obviously was something of an exaggeration, 8,000 being a more likely figure. As originally reported, the big top was a 160-foot round with three 50- and two 30-foot middles. However, this obviously is an error for pictures taken at Marion, Indiana, show it definitely as having five 50-foot middles. Looking further at these and other pictures we see that the blues were 14 rows high but that the backside reserves were only eight high starbacks and the front side reserves were only eight high chairs so that there were only eight seats for about 8,000 or at the most 8,500. Of course, more could be got into the tent by "strawing" them on the ground. In any event the big top was large enough to give the appearance to the average townier of being about as big as the Ringling big top, which was only a 180-foot round with five 50-foot middles. The added width of the Ringling big top would, however, give that show perhaps a 50 per cent greater seating capacity.

The other principal tops were the menagerie, an 80-foot round with four 40-foot middles, and a large 30-by-30-foot entrance marquee. The side show top was a 70-foot

ONLY A FEW MORE DAYS TO WAIT FOR THE  
**BIGGEST AND GRANDEST  
AMUSEMENT ALLIANCE  
OF THESE MODERN TIMES**



**WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS TRAINED WILD BEASTS**

TO BE SEEN ONLY WITH THE  
**CARL HAGENBECK ANIMAL SHOWS AND THE  
HIGHEST-CLASS CIRCUS IN THE WORLD  
THE GREAT WALLACE SHOWS**

Creating the Greatest Show ever Organized and Presenting the Greatest Animal Exhibition of  
LIFE-TO-DEATH Variety of the Century

**MARVELOUS BRUTE ACTORS**



**MILIE NADJE**

THE YOUNG OF THE CIRCUS WORLD

Presented in the BEST PROTECT VIBRANT WORLD

WALLACE'S ANIMAL SHOWS, MARION, INDIANA



**THE DEATH DEFYING DARE DEVIL OF THE DAY**

THE ONLY VETERAN WITH HUMANITY DURING PERFORMANCES

WALLACE'S ANIMAL SHOWS, MARION, INDIANA

WALLACE'S SYMPHONY BAND

GRAND GLITTERING STREET PARADE

THE WALLACE SHOWS, MARION, INDIANA

The 1913 herald of the Hagenbeck show was printed in black on one side and red on the other.

round with two 40-foot middles; the dressing room top and ring stock top each 70-foot rounds with two 40-foot middles;

A group of chefs posed in front of a kitchen tent. The wagon in the background has a seal on it stating "Highest Class Circus in the World."



draft stock top a 75-foot round with two 40-foot middles; and there were two dining tops, one for staff and performers, and one for the workmen, each 35 by 85 feet and one, possibly two, kitchen tops.

After leaving Beaumont they moved to Port Arthur where they were again greeted by heavy rains but in spite of it did good business. Orange and Lake Charles, Louisiana, the next two towns, had to be skipped because the lots were in such poor condition. At that point because of the continuing bad weather it was decided to also skip Crowley, Opelousa, New Iberia and Morgan City and move directly to New Orleans. Of all these towns missed it was Lake Charles that was the worst, for the day after they had been scheduled to be there the lot was under five feet of water.

By skipping these towns and moving directly to New Orleans they were able to open there on Wednesday, October 1, three days ahead of the regular billing. This was accomplished with the help of the press and emergency advertising. Business on Wednesday was good, better on Thursday and continued to improve through Sunday, the last day of the stay. While in New Orleans it was announced that the show would be much enlarged for 1914 going to possibly 60 cars and with a much enlarged menagerie with more elephants, two giraffes, another hippo, a rhinoceros and several more cages of animals.

After leaving New Orleans and playing Baton Rouge they moved into Mississippi at McComb for Tuesday October 7. This was followed by 13 dates billed in that state: Brookhaven, Natchez, Port Gibson and Vicksburg. Vicksburg, however, was lost due to continuing bad weather. Next came Greenville, Greenwood, Yazoo City, Canton, Jackson and Laurel. The week of October 20 opened in Hattiesburg followed by Lumberton and Gulfport, after which it moved to Mobile, Brewton and Pensacola. October was closed out in Alabama at Montgomery, Selma and Opelika followed in Georgia by Newnan and LaGrange. These latter two towns are quite small now and were then and it is surprising that a show the size of Hagenbeck-Wallace could find sufficient trackage for unloading let alone enough people to support it financially. Nevertheless play these towns they did. November opened at Talladega. The last full week of the season was played in Birmingham, Jasper, Aberdeen, Tupelo, Columbus and Tuscaloosa. The season ended Monday November 10 in Okalona, Mississippi.

The show then made its home run to winter quarters in Peru. The season was 29 weeks long. Eighteen states were visited. The total mileage, including the home run of 629 miles, was 9,696 miles. The average nightly jump was only 68 miles. The longest run was 191 miles from Marion, Indiana, to Newark, Ohio, and the shortest was 6 miles from Troy, New York, to Albany. There were four two-day stands, one five-day stand, and one week stand. In spite of the late opening and the bad weather causing lost stands in the last month, the season was financially successful.



# THE LENT AND ROCKWELL PAPERS AT SOMERS

by Stuart Thayer

The business records of the early circus are not available, as yet, in any quantity. This can be said of many businesses in the pre-corporate and pre-income tax era, especially of small concerns, which certainly includes circuses. It might be a rule-of-thumb that the smaller the enterprise, the less likely any of its records will survive.

Since the circus was a simple operation, insofar as bookkeeping was concerned, there would seem to be no good reason to preserve its records. Until the passage of the entertainment tax during the Civil War no one but the proprietor and his partners had any interest in the results of a season's effort. However, as we have learned, there is always that individual who, for reasons of his own, conserves his records. Copeland MacAllister, as an example, recently discovered the records of Augustine Conant, a showman who apparently never threw anything away. Two other showmen who saved at least part of their paperwork were Lewis B. Lent and Henry Rockwell.

At the Somers Historical Society in the famous Elephant Hotel in Somers, New York, there is a small collection of circus material, most of it recently catalogued and thus available to the researcher for the first time. Among the items are some records that were preserved by Lent and Rockwell, or so it appears to us, and we think they may have been created as reports to employers and/or partners. The papers cover the period 1836 to 1843, when Lent was in partnership with Oscar Brown and with William Delavan on separate shows and employed by June, Titus and Angevine on a third. Rockwell was a manager for June, Titus and Angevine.

## 1836

J. Purdy Brown, famed as the first circus owner to use a canvas tent, died in 1834, and his brother, Oscar W. Brown, took over the show. In 1835, Brown formed a partnership with Lent and the title became "Brown & Company." The first records we have are those for the daily expenses in Vicksburg, Mississippi, in November, 1836. The circus had begun the year at Natchez, gone upriver as far as Cincinnati and then descended.

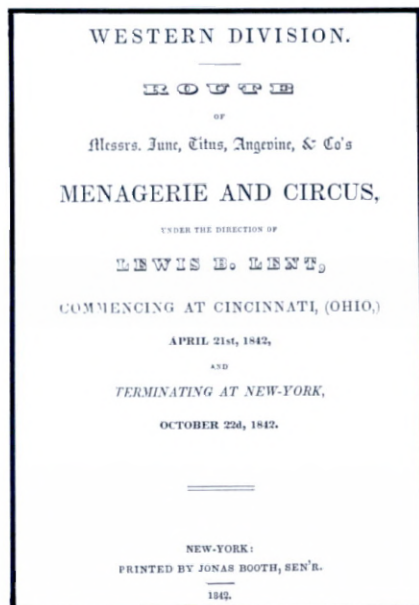
As we know, early circus proprietors boarded their employees at hotels and paid for their meals. Lent's records indicate that four hotels were used by the troupe, 11 staying in one, 8 in another, 3 in a third and 2 in a fourth. The question might arise as to why they weren't all put up at the same establishment; small town hotels in the nineteenth century only had eight to ten rooms. The charge for these guests was one dollar per day and presumably included two meals. The names of 8 of these 23 peo-



Lewis Lent had a long career in the circus business, both on wagon shows and gillye railroad circuses.

ple are unknown to us and could have been workmen. In addition to these, 3 people found their own board. This indicates a

Title page of 1842 June, Titus and Angevine & Co. route book, of which at least a half dozen copies exist. The printer, Jonas Booth, was a show print house, and this book marks the beginning of a long tradition of show printers publishing route books. Pfening Archives.



troupe of 26, of whom 1 was the manager and 11 were workmen.

Stable rent was a flat three dollars per day, apparently covering all the horses, the number of which is not listed in the notes. The lot rent was ten dollars and there is no sign as to whether that was per day or for the entire six-day stand. The license fee was ten dollars per night.

One item that we can't explain is that for lumber—\$170.00. This would buy about 6,000 board feet in 1836 and may be for the construction of a wooden sidewall to which the show affixed a canvas top. This was not an unusual arrangement in the colder months.

## 1839

Henry Rockwell, a well-known rider who had been before the public over 12 years, was the manager of the June, Titus, Angevine & Co. circus in 1839. They had a menagerie on the road as well, a division they also followed in 1840. His records, no doubt the basis for reports to the owners, are in the collection at Somers. Salaries were paid monthly to the 20 performers. Three of these 20 were the wives of artists on the show and 3 were apprentices. Both wives and apprentices are listed as part of their husband's or master's wages. Rockwell drew the most, \$120.00 per month, which included his two apprentices.

Three performers drew \$100.00 a month. These were John Gossin, the clown, and included his wife, Lucinda, who was a rider; Seth B. Howes and his apprentice; and John Smith, a singer of comic songs who later became a well-known minstrel performer.

Eighty dollars a month went to Wilson Howes and included the use of his own horse, as opposed to his riding a show-owned animal. Wilson Howes was a cousin of Nathan Howes and Seth B. Howes. Henry Needham, the riding master, and his equestrienne wife also drew \$80.00 per month.

John Shindle, a rider, was paid \$60.00; Andrew Downie, clown, \$50.00; and three lesser lights \$40.00 each. These would have been general performers. One act, that of Gullen and Hood, drew \$40.00 together. We think these are two lady riders.

In addition to the ring performers there were six musicians who received \$28.00 each. Nine baggage men and six grooms each were given \$15.00 a month.

The total monthly salary cost, then, was \$1,298.00, which breaks down into \$43.26 per day. In addition, feed for 32 horses was \$20.00, board for people \$31.50 and laundry five dollars. In this period the show fed, lodged and provided laundry expense for the personnel. License and lot ran





Messrs. JUNE, TITUS, ANGEVINE & CO.'S  
MENAGERIE AND CIRCUS,

THE greatest combination of Olympic exercises, and the most magnificent collection of living wild animals ever presented together in one Caravan in the U. States, will be exhibited in Providence, on Dorrance st., on Friday, Saturday, Monday and Tuesday, April 30th, and 1st, 3d and 4th of May, for four days only.

The Menagerie of Living Wild Animals, and the Circus performances given by the company of June, Titus, Angevine & Co. of the Bowery Amphitheatre, New York, have been the wonder and admiration of the million wherever they have been exhibited. At no time and in no other country has there ever been collected together so general, so beautiful, or so healthful a menagerie of living animals, or an entertainment in the Arena comprising such an array of talent, as the one now offered by the above named proprietors for the patronage of the public.

Doors open at 2 o'clock, p. m. and at 6½ in the evening. Admission to Menagerie and Circus—Boxes 50 cents, Pit 25. Children under 12 years, to the Boxes, half price—no half price to the Pit.

The same will be exhibited at Pawcatuck, on Saturday, April 24th; at South Kingstown on Monday, 26th; at Wickford, on Tuesday, 27th; at Phenix, on Wednesday, 28th; at Stone Factory Village, on Thursday, 29th. a2f

While their newspaper ad showed a cut of one of the giraffes Rufus Welch imported in 1837, the text of this 1841 June, Titus and Angevine ad made no mention of the animal. Pfening Archives.

\$15.00 per diem and advertising was five dollars a day.

The nut was \$120.00 per day, the equivalent of selling 240 50-cent tickets. From this it can be seen that the potential profit was considerable. The tent held perhaps 500 people, so a half-house guaranteed expenses, just as it did a hundred years later.

It is fortunate that there is also an equipment list for the 1839 edition of June, Titus, Angevine & Co. in the Rockwell papers. It provides us one of our few insights into the capital requirements of a circus of the time. This was one of the larger shows on tour, there being 26 performers and 21 other employees. Most shows paid half that many people. There were also four administrative positions, filled by men on contract and whose salaries are not part of the nut; if the circus made money, they were paid; otherwise their draws during the season were all they received.

The big top, probably a 50- or 60-foot round, was valued at \$500.00, the poles at \$100.00. It was customary to cut a center pole for each stand, so we assume these

were side poles, easily carried in the light, dray wagons then used. Seats were valued at \$100.00 and probably did not entirely circle the ring, leaving most of the area for standees, those who purchased 25-cent "pit" tickets.

Ten of the horses were carried at \$2400.00 and must have been the ring horses; 22 others were listed at \$2640.00, and were surely the baggage teams. Thus, ring horses were worth twice what dray animals brought. There is an almost infallible rule-of-thumb that the number of wagons times three is the number of dray horses on a show; this allows for two- and four-horse hitches. In the case of June, Titus, Angevine & Co., seven wagons, valued at \$525.00, gives us 21 horses, and the advertising wagon, \$150.00, provides for the twenty-second horse. At \$75.00 apiece, we conclude that the wagons were not new.

Bills, or posters, were listed at \$500.00, which with the tent were the most expensive of the property. Two riding pads totalling \$60.00; ten hack saddles and bridles, most likely those used in the grand entry, were \$100.00. Trappings, some fancy horse hangings, were also \$100.00.

The equipment and horses were valued at \$7,175.00, a considerable sum for the day, yet a substantial return on this investment can be projected when possible profits of \$250.00 per day (based on capacity crowds) are matched against it.

#### 1841

A single item from this year was preserved by L.B. Lent, who was connected with the eastern unit of June, Titus, Angevine & Co. It is a contract with an innkeeper in Hopkinton, Massachusetts, where the circus and menagerie played on May 11.

Under its terms the inn agreed to provide board and lodging for 35 men, two to a bed, plus three meals a day for 62½¢ each. There was a lesser charge for boys, but since none accompanied the troupe, this portion of the printed contract was left blank. Forty-eight horses travelled with the show and the innkeeper agreed to provide stabling, hay, bedding and one-half bushel of oats for each animal at the same 62½¢ each he charged for the men. Ponies were provided for at one-half this rate.

One elephant was to be housed in a suitable place and given hay and straw for 37¢ per day. Extra oats for the horses were to be charged at 50¢ a bushel.

To feed the menagerie, the innkeeper agreed to deliver 50 pounds of fresh beef or veal at the pavilion by 2:00 p.m. on show day. The price of this was agreed upon at 4¢ per pound. Five bundles of straw and 50 pounds of hay were to be delivered for an additional 50¢. The lot rent, paid to the inn, as that was where the lot was located, was to be \$2.00.

"I will prepare supper for the men on their arrival and have the stables ready for the horses," was part of the printed portion of the contract. In all, the hotel operator received \$56.74 for boarding and feeding the men, horses, one elephant and for providing the menagerie supplies and a lot.

#### THREE EXHIBITIONS IN ONE. PROPRIETORS—JUNE, TITUS, ANGEVINE & Co., BOWERY AMPHITHEATRE, NEW YORK.



#### THE CIRCUS, THE MENAGERIE, & THE FRENCH HERCULES Mons. PAUL!

To take place in Rochester, on Wednesday, the 28th, Thursday, the 29th, and Friday, the 30th September, inst.

The engagement of Mons. PAUL, has enabled Messrs. JUNE, TITUS, ANGEVINE & Co., the Proprietors of the Circus and Menagerie, to add a New Feature to their already unequalled Exhibition, being the most extraordinary ever witnessed in this country.

The Stupendous Feats of Mons. PAUL, enumerated below, acquired for him in Europe, the expressive appellation of LE MONSTRE!

His power is superior to the united strength of Four Horses! which he will satisfactorily prove in various contests and feats in the open Arena; and for the successful achievement of which he stands prepared to wager the sum of One Thousand Dollars! He will ascend and descend

#### THE FIREMAN'S ROPE!

Feet uppermost, a distance of twenty feet, by the muscular power of his hands alone! He will defy the united strength of any SPAN OF HORSES that may be brought against him. The horses may be attached to the legs and trunk of the Herculean Performer, and urged to their utmost power, which he will successfully resist, while lying in a horizontal position, by the muscular strength of his body alone.

He will, by a fair pull, after Four Strong Horses have failed in the effort, break a new Rope of Sixty Strand, by main strength alone.

The next achievement of Mons. Paul will be to sustain upon his breast, with his body bent backward, supported by his hands and feet resting on the ground,

#### A CANNON OF BRASS OR IRON!

Weighing from 700 to 1,000 pounds, and allowing a charge to be fired from the same, while in that position. Mons. PAUL will perform this feat with any Iron or Brass Cannon of that dimension that may be brought to him.

He will also perform a COMIC WALTZ, with Two Men suspended from his shoulders, with whom he will rise from a horizontal posture on the earth, without the aid of his hands or arms.

Mons. PAUL will close his performances by

#### FIBING A CANNON!

Weighing 400 pounds, from his left shoulder.

Mons. PAUL is in stature only four feet six inches, and eighteen years of age. His muscular strength is only equalled by the beautiful symmetry of his person. A member of the medical faculty who visited him at his recent engagement at the Bowery Theatre, N. Y., pronounced him to be the most perfectly formed model of manly elegance and physical power that had ever come under their observation.

Prices of admission, Box 50 cents; Pit 25 cents. a p19 art

In 1842, June, Titus and Angevine & Co. featured Mons. Paul, who did a strongman act. From Rochester (New York) Republican of September 26, 1842. Pfening Archives.

#### 1842

Lewis B. Lent managed the Western Division of June, Titus, Angevine & Co. in 1842. This is the unit that published a route book, of which five or six survive in various collections around the country.



One of the documents Lent saved was a performer's contract, that of Henry Gardner, an equestrian, who joined the show in October. Because it was signed so late in the season, the contract was with Lent instead of with the owners, who would have had the other contracts signed before opening day. Interestingly, the phrase "to make myself generally useful" appears in this contract; it is still a standard phrase in employment agreements. Gardner was to be paid \$15.00 a week, of which seven was to be paid in cash and the rest held until the end of the season. We now call this a "holdback." If Gardner left the company before his contract expired his pay would be but \$7.50 per week; if he stayed it would be \$15.00.

#### 1843

L.B. Lent and William Delavan leased the Welch & Mann Circus for five weeks beginning July 24, 1843, and the payroll and expense records for that period are in the files at Somers. Unfortunately, none of the performers on the 1839 payroll were with this show, so exact comparisons cannot be made. The leading rider in 1839, Seth B. Howes, was paid \$100.00 per month. The leading rider in 1843, George Cadwallader, received \$90.00. John Wells, the clown, was paid \$100.00 a month in 1843, but his salary included his wife and infant daughter. The next highest stipend

went to Edward Wood and his wife, who drew \$60.00. The rest are quite a bit below these figures at \$48.00, \$36.00 and \$28.00. This tells us that the practice of hiring one or two headliners at large salaries and a group of lesser lights at low salaries is not a modern phenomenon.

James Nixon, who would own his own shows in the 1850s and 1860s, appears here as a lowly twenty-seven-dollar-a-month acrobat. Officer Merryfield is listed at \$20.00; we presume he was hired to keep order in the arena, a common practice in urban areas. He may have been an off-duty policeman. A Doctor Riley is shown at \$24.00. He might have been the veterinarian, though having one on the payroll was not a usual thing in that time. A camel is here at \$6.00 a month, probably leased for use in what we call the "spec." The bill poster was paid more than most of the performers, \$34.00.

They bought chestnuts, amount not listed, for \$10.00 per month. These would be roasted and sold by vendors in the arena. Tanbark for the ring cost \$1.50 a load, presumably a wagonload, and sawdust, which was mixed with the tanbark for the ring surface, was 5¢ a bushel. During the five weeks the circus used two loads of tanbark and 80 bushels of sawdust.

The cost of paper is an interesting item

for this 1843 show. A five-sheet, colored poster was 8¢, half-a-cent extra for the date strip, which was called that. Three-sheet black and white posters were 5¢ each. Handbills were of two types, bills and house bills. We would guess that the discrimination was that house bills were put up in inns and taverns, while the ordinary bills were handed out in the streets. There must have been a difference in size between them as the bills for distribution cost half-a-cent and the house bills were five for a penny.

Newspaper advertising receipts are included in the archives and show us that the circus advertised in three different Boston papers. Unfortunately, deciphering the details of these receipts is very difficult, but it appears that ads cost \$2.25 on some occasions and 25¢ on others, probably based on column inches and number of insertions, just as at present. One newspaper, the *Boston Transcript*, discounted the bill 50 per cent. Since it was the largest of the three papers, its rates were probably higher than the other two.

These records are only some of the material at Somers. The rest is mostly bits and pieces, to which future acquisitions will hopefully give breadth. In no other collection have we found so much information on the economic aspects of operating circuses before the Civil War.

## BILL KASISKA'S LETTERHEADS



This striking letter sheet was used by Germany's Sarraiani Circus in 1929. The elephants and the area outside the ring are in a delicate blue-gray. The ring is a light cream yellow, and the elephants are, of course, gold leafing the title. The border is trimmed in gold leaf. The overall effect makes this piece one of the most dramatic circus letterheads ever printed.





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